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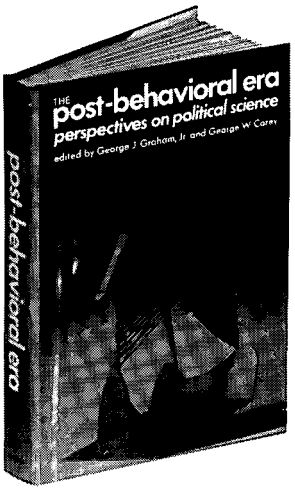

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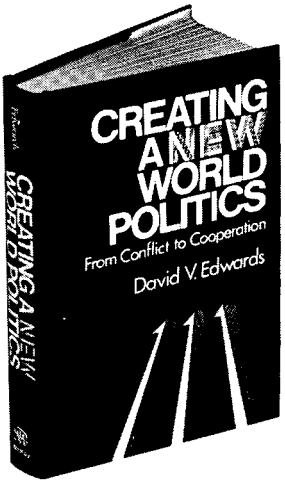

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Published monthly by The Washington Monthly Co., 1028 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
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Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions—$12.95, one year; $20, two years; $28, three years. Foreign, including Canada, $1.50 per year additional surface; air mail rates available on request. Back issues, $1.50.

Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Send all remittances and correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and change of address to 1028 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Printed by The Lane Press, Inc., Burlington, Vt.

Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. and additional offices.

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VOLUME FIVE NUMBER ONE
MARCH 1973

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by Walter Shapiro
For people who are wondering when they would hear something good about government, this article should be a treat. The development of America's first high-speed train shows how projects that succeed can be as instructive as those that fail. 7

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Feminine deodorant sprays are Madison Avenue's delight and Women's Lib's bane. To the FDA, they're just another bungled case. 19

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Letters

Screwing of the Average Taxpayer

Congratulations on your excellent article in the January, 1973, issue by James Fallows, "The Screwing of the Average Taxpayer."

America needs tax reform. It also urgently needs spending reform.

The White House and Congress should spend less time expounding our GNP and take a hard look at our TLI. We estimate that the Taxpayer Liability Index (Federal debt plus contingent liabilities) is now approaching $2 *trillion* dollars.

Who will pay this bill? You guessed it—the American taxpayer. He or she, black or white, has become the new "economic slave" on the Plantation of Federal Misspending.

SID TAYLOR
Washington, D. C.

Sid Taylor is research director of the National Taxpayers Union.

Public Help for Private Schools

Re Charles Peters' "Winning Back the Ethnics, Public Help for Private Schools" [January], any legislation that indiscriminately subsidizes directly or indirectly private schools is undesirable, whatever the political use to which it might be put. While you might help preserve socio-economically balanced schools in the central city you would also help underwrite segregation academies elsewhere.

DAVID C. MACMICHAEL
Menlo Park, Calif.

David MacMichael is a senior social scientist at the Center for Study of Social Policy.

The editor replies:

While I believe that the First Amendment permits government aid to private schools, I think the Fourteenth Amendment would prohibit such help to any segregated school. Thus I see the Constitution permitting a program of aid to elementary and secondary schools generally, including private and parochial schools, but not including any segregated schools.

Moynihan's Ship of Fools

Taylor Branch's article on Moynihan's "ship of fools" ["Pat Moynihan's Ship of Fools," January] is an important restatement of the original merits of Nixon's Family Assistance Program. Branch's analysis of Moynihan's shell game reemphasizes the basic importance of the concept of a guaranteed income.

It has largely been lost in campaign rhetoric that McGovern's original proposal of a minimum income grant, based on Professor Tobin's 1966 proposal, also shared the basic concept of a guaranteed income with FAP. The FAP and McGovern proposals differed in magnitude, but they agreed that a minimum income should be the right of every citizen in this country. The total cost of FAP in the original bill (HR 16311) was $13.7 billion; McGovern's total cost would have been $210 billion gross with a net redistributive effect of about $22 billion after a proportional income tax.

One of the major successful arguments used against both FAP and McGovern's proposal was the large costs of both programs. It will be crucial to any future proposal of a minimum income guarantee that this criticism is more effectively countered than in the past. Therefore, when the concept of minimum income is reintroduced, it should be accompanied with an extensive list of federal programs that can be reduced or eliminated as a result of the guaranteed income program, emphasizing the trade-offs between the present and future and most importantly reducing the total costs of the future programs.

Both the FAP and McGovern proposals netted the present welfare program, but neither proposal considered the possibility of netting a number of other government programs which would be redundant if the guaranteed income concept was adequately structured. For example, if the guaranteed income provided an adequate living standard, all of the food programs, veterans non-service connected pensions, housing aids, and possibly medicaid would become extraneous and should be reduced or eliminated. These programs, including maintenance assistance, would total over $20 billion in 1974 alone, and therefore would be a substantial help in defraying some of the costs of an adequate guaranteed income program in this country.

More radical proposals would even include the elimination of the unemployment insurance trust funds since people would be guaranteed a minimum income

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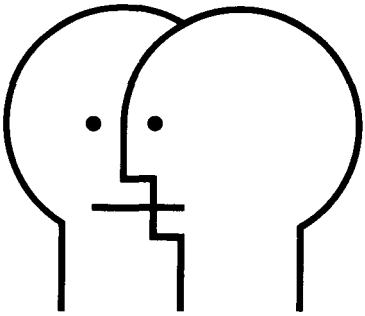

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The Role of Congress in Foreign Policy

with Senators John C. Stennis and J. William Fulbright
Senators Stennis and Fulbright agree that the Constitution grants Congress substantial powers in the area of foreign policy. They disagree over whether Congress has exercised these powers effectively in recent decades.

Civil Disobedience: Aid or Hindrance to Justice?

with William Sloane Coffin Jr. and Morris I. Leibman
The Rev. Dr. Coffin, Chaplain of Yale University, contends that civil disobedience throughout the centuries has greatly aided justice. Mr. Leibman, a prominent attorney, is less enthusiastic. He argues that the American system provides the apparatus to further justice without reverting to violence and civil disobedience.

Social Security: Universal or Selective?

with Milton Friedman and Wilbur J. Cohen
Mr. Cohen, former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, and economist Milton Friedman choose to disagree in a highly informative and entertaining debate. Mr. Friedman wants to phase out social security and replace its welfare features with a negative income tax. Mr. Cohen takes vigorous exception.

Each debate is available in its own hardbound book for $7.50 and on its own tape cassette for $5.00

Can Regulatory Agencies Protect the Consumer?

with Manuel F. Cohen and George J. Stigler
Mr. Stigler, of the "Chicago School" of economists, and Manuel F. Cohen, former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, agree that competition protects the consumer but disagree over the best way to achieve and guarantee it.

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regardless of work status and the social security trust funds. These two programs alone will total $54.3 billion in 1974. Both of these benefit programs are financed by regressive payroll taxes so their elimination would have the additional benefit of making the total federal tax system more progressive.

By 1980, the programs mentioned above will cost over $100 billion annually and therefore should be a major factor in considering the price and feasibility of future guaranteed income proposals. In fact, if the guaranteed income concept does not replace these patchwork programs of the present welfare system, it will be like trying to put a new engine in an old car without taking out the old engine. It would be inefficient, illogical, and costly.

LUCIE DUPIN
Washington, D. C.

Lucie Dupin is a pseudonym for an employee of the Executive Office of the President.

The editor replies:

We agree. Milton Friedman made this point in our May, 1972, issue ("The Case Against Social Security"). Moynihan probably didn't want to deal with it in 1970 since it could arouse the anxiety of the beneficiaries of the programs to be replaced. McGovern, probably for similar reasons, didn't face the question of what programs were to be replaced. Thus both the Moynihan and McGovern proposals had the Achilles heel of potentially astronomic cost. The McGovern experience will scare politicians away from the guaranteed annual income for at least the next few years. This has one advantage. It means that there is plenty of time for a thorough exploration of the programs to be replaced without causing hysterical defensiveness on the part of the present beneficiaries of these programs.

As I was sailing along with you on your fascinating Moynihan article, I hit a reef in your astonishing parenthetical assertion that the Kennedy liberals had compromised their principles "when they decided the only way to reach full employment was through defense spending." A reading of history as perverted as that (even if fashionable in the Nixon White House) is hard to come by in light of the facts:

During the Kennedy-Johnson Administration, unemployment was reduced from a peak of seven per cent in 1961 to 4½ per cent in August of 1965 at the same time that defense expenditures dropped from over nine per cent to only seven per cent of GNP.

When President Kennedy ran into a brick wall in Congress in his civilian spending proposals (which were in good part motivated by a desire to get the economy moving again), he turned to the big income tax cut, which his liberal economic advisers recommended as the fastest way to revive the economy and provide the will and wherewithal for his domestic initiatives.

Given the stimulus of the tax cut, the economy was moving steadily toward full employment without inflation (unemployment went down to 4.4 per cent with inflation holding at two per cent) by mid-1965, when Vietnam escalation knocked the whole program awry.

So you have it just backwards. It was civilian spending, tax cuts, and monetary expansion that were moving the economy steadily toward stable full employment, and Vietnam spending that overheated the economy and saddled us with inflation.

WALTER W. HELLER
Minneapolis, Minn.

Walter Heller is Regents' Professor of Economics at the University of Minnesota and former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The editor replies:

Professor Heller is right. Defense expenditures went down. But space expenditures went up. Here is what Hugo Young, Bryan Silcock, and Peter Dunn wrote in "Why We Went to the Moon" (*The Washington Monthly*, April, 1970):

Of all the people involved, none was better placed to witness the unfolding drama than the man in charge of both space and defense affairs at the Bureau of the Budget, Willis H. Shapley. Shapley, a reflective intellectual who sits somewhat oddly beside the gung-ho pioneers of space, later became a senior official at NASA itself. He is one of the very few space policy-makers now willing to admit that the greatest scientific adventure in modern times was underpinned by some formidable realities closer to home. . . .

With Atlas, Minuteman, Polaris and Titan, the four main elements of American strategic power, all moving toward completion, industry, too, was anticipating harder times. There was, Shapley says, great concern about this: "Could we afford the consequences of such a decline in defense procurement?"

The most immediate earthly benefit of the moon program has clearly been the one which Willis Shapley described when he disclosed the reasons underlying Kennedy's decision: the pumping of jobs and money through the aerospace industry into the economy at large. ■

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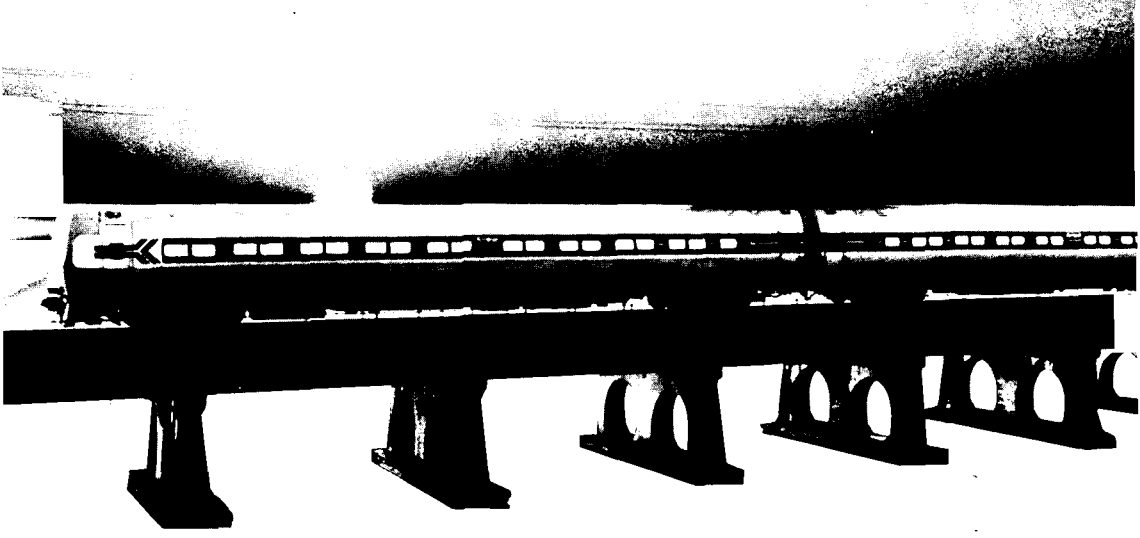
The seven secrets of the Metroliner's success



by Walter Shapiro

Government has become synonymous with failure. The situation is so bleak that the new intellectual pastime is determining the last time in American history when everything actually worked—some choose World War II, and modernists hold out for the middle years of the Eisenhower Administration.

Admittedly, in the last decade, the notion that government can't do anything right has been backed by some pretty convincing evidence. Determined to avoid future debacles, we have tried assiduously to absorb the depressing lessons of the 1960s. But against the backdrop of current cynicism, it is difficult to suggest that we can learn from the government's successes—as well as its failures—without sounding like a character out of *Bambi*.

Part of the problem is simply a scarcity of programs that worked. The one which springs most quickly to mind is NASA's Apollo program, which put a man on the moon. Following the landing, newspaper editorials repeatedly asked, "If the government can send a man to the moon, why can't it repair those potholes on Main Street?" But this question was primarily rhetorical—no one looked seriously at the Apollo program for clues about how anything

Walter Shapiro is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

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might be fixed. The space program's very extravagance prevented it from being taken as anything more than an expensive curiosity.

But there were elements in Apollo that just weren't that unique. There was, for example, another project with both modest goals and funding which followed many of the same patterns as the space program and worked. Amid a host of uncompleted programs, the 1960s managed to give birth to the Metroliner, the modern, electric-powered train which makes the 231-mile trip between New York and Washington in less than three hours. Vast sums were not spent on the project. The government's investment was not much more than a paltry $10 million, with the railroad contributing $55 million. Although the Metroliner obviously did not match the complexity of a moon launch, the task of building an entirely new train from scratch did present some unique problems.

At a time when passenger service had deteriorated to a level reminiscent of third-class coaches on the old Trans-Siberian Railroad, a partnership between the government and Penn Central to improve service was not designed to inspire confidence.

Picture the situation. Here was the government trying to create one of the world's most technologically advanced trains in conjunction with a railroad that was being systematically looted by its officers in the unseen prelude to the biggest bankruptcy in American business history. Here was a contractor, the Budd Company, which had remained in the railroad-car building business largely out of habit, working on only a handful of new projects since World War II. For more than a decade the New York City subway system was virtually Budd's only customer. With help from groups like this, creating the Metroliner was almost analogous to constructing a battleship from old chewing-gum wrappers.

Despite the problems, the Metroliner has been an unqualified success, starting with its first run in January, 1969. Luring businessmen and other travelers off the Eastern Airlines shuttle, the Metroliner's 14 round trips a day have brightened AMTRAK's balance sheet with profits of just under $10 million in 1972.

But there's more to the Metroliner story than just profits. At a time when clogged highways and overstacked airports have become environmentalist cliches, the Metroliner experiment has proven that when given adequate service, the public will still ride trains—our most ecologically sound method of transportation.

The glamor of NASA and its lavish budget gave the space program freedom from many bureaucratic roadblocks. But the Metroliner did not have it nearly as easy. The roots of the high-speed train are in the Northeast Corridor Project set up in the Commerce Department in 1963. In 1965, the Metroliner project itself was started in the new Office of High Speed Ground Transportation and survived a 1967 shift from Commerce to the newly created Department of Transportation (DOT) that would have sidetracked many larger programs. Unlike most government procurement contracts, authority for the actual construction of Metroliner rested with the railroad, which was putting up most of the money. This relationship was complicated by the 1968 merger that transformed the Pennsylvania Railroad into part of the soon-to-be-bankrupt Penn Central system.

Analyzing the complex history of the Metroliner project, seven simple steps seem to account for its success. They are not foolproof. But they do help give some idea how the good things happen.

Step One—A Clear Goal

A successful project can easily be distinguished from other bureaucratic efforts by the clarity of its goal. With the Metroliner the objective was to build a train which could make the

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trip between New York and Washington in less than three hours. With the Apollo program it was to put a man on the moon. While the wisdom of the goal is not necessarily important (witness the space program), its existence is indispensible. A clear objective provides a sense of mission where otherwise there would be bureaucratic lassitude. Who would dare take a three-hour lunch when we had to get to the moon before the Russians? On the other hand, who wouldn't leave the office early on Friday afternoon when all that was pending were projections of personnel needs for the General Services Administration?

The history of the Northeast Corridor Project indicates the kind of focus firm goals can provide. Set up on a temporary basis in 1963, it had only a vague mandate to examine rail passenger service between Boston and Washington. Open-ended goals like these are what make bureaucracy thrive. The absence of a clear-cut purpose also explains why Robert Nelson, the project's director, said, "At the time of the Kennedy assassination we were just floundering."

It took presidential intervention—a request for permanent legislation to improve rail service in the Northeast—to get the project moving (see step two). Since in 1964 passenger trains seemed almost as risky a proposition as dirigibles, the initial White House decision was to make this a low-budget effort. Such parsimony normally creates $30-million worth of inconclusive feasibility studies. In this case, however, it created the Metroliner because the Office of High Speed Ground Transportation was set up with a firm objective.

Bob Nelson had a hypothesis that transportation demand was particularly sensitive to time savings. Counting travel to and from the airport, a plane flight from New York to Washington took more than two hours. Although the Pennsylvania Railroad's best train did the trip in 3:35, the average trip was over four hours. All it took was for Nelson to ask, "How much would it cost to set up a demonstration project that would cut an hour off the running time to New York?" and get the answer, "Not much," and the Metroliner was born.

There is a minor catch. In seeking specific goals, you only get what you ask for. No matter what the objective, it will not be surpassed. Obviously, if you are going to the moon this is not a major problem. But the goal of a New York-to-Washington trip in less than three hours has resulted in trains with running times of exactly 2:59. A non-stop Metroliner which made the trip in 2:30 was quickly abandoned, for reasons ranging from poor scheduling to insufficient patronage to high maintenance costs. But the real explanation was an absence of motive; all the government's contract with the railroad mandated was a trip of less than three hours.

Step Two—Presidential Involvement

In almost every account of prerevolutionary Russia there was an obligatory scene: an old woman watching Cossack troops loot her village, murmurs prayerfully, "If the Tsar only knew."

"If the President only knew," might be inscribed on the walls of every federal office as a monument to all unsuccessful projects, both past and future. Although the bureaucracy can still thwart a project which has presidential support, it is virtually impossible for a program to succeed without strong White House backing—or the appearance of it.

Here again the space program provides a model. Not only did NASA have secure access to the White House before Apollo, but it was President Kennedy himself who publicly declared the national objective of landing a man on the moon. Apollo began under the supervision of Vice President Johnson, and when he succeeded to the presidency, success

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was written in the sky.

But Apollo is the exception; generally a catalyst is needed to attract the President's attention. Under the Tsar, a word or two from the right grand duke could have far more impact than days of demonstrations before the Winter Palace. With the Metroliner, access to the President was through Rhode Island's patrician Senator Claiborne Pell. Pell played the role of catalyst to perfection, convincing two different administrations of the need for improved passenger service.

In retrospect, Pell's ideas about railroads seem quaintly naive on the one hand and fuzzily futuristic on the other. It's easy to wonder whether the Senator would have been interested in railroads at all if service had been better on the sleeper he rode regularly from Providence to Washington. Passenger trains had few defenders during the early 1960s, and it must have taken a deep reluctance to fly and many long nights on sidings outside Trenton to turn Pell into Congress' leading advocate of improved rail service.

Senator Pell's pet notion was a multi-state transportation pact, modeled after the New York Port Authority, to run railroad service from Boston to Washington. At times, Pell just seemed to long for a return to the gentility which characterized the European railroads he remembered from his youth in a diplomatic family. But some of his ideas seemed to be lifted from Walt Disney's Tomorrowland as the Senator conjured up visions of monorails, air-cushioned vehicles, and even rocket-propelled trains traveling the Northeast corridor.

But Pell's role did not require ideas, just access. After a few well-publicized speeches on the subject, Pell, whose ties with President Kennedy were both political and personal, approached the White House. The Senator's intervention—and the aid of the Budget Bureau, which was trying to relinquish its role as the government's expert on a third-rate subject like passenger trains—led to the creation of the Northeast Corridor Project in 1963.

A year later, with a Texan as President, Pell feared the end of White House interest in Boston-to-Washington train service. Since linking the Northeast Corridor to a plan to upgrade rail service from Waco to El Paso was unlikely, Pell took a different tack, appealing to Johnson's political instincts in an election year. The Rhode Island Democrat presented the President with a terse memo on the program—stressing the total electoral vote represented by the states in the Northeast corridor.

Men's fates were often decided by a nod from the Tsar. In this case, all it took was for Johnson to scrawl on the Pell memo, "Tell Commerce to get off its ass on this," and the Metroliner program was under way.

Even long after a President's attention has shifted elsewhere, a skillful project director (see step three) can nurture the illusion of continuing White House involvement. While risky when dealing with other branches of the government with their own access to the President, this strategy is virtually foolproof when dealing with those outside the government, who are in no position to call your bluff.

The Pennsylvania Railroad's interest in the Metroliner indicates the benefits of maintaining an aura of presidential support. Building the Metroliner required the PRR to invest $55 million in a project where the lion's share of the credit would go to the federal government. The Pennsy in fact had recently turned down an in-house proposal for a new New York-to-Washington train because investment capital was tight and most of the railroad's top management believed their own public rhetoric about passenger service being inherently unprofitable.

Enter an unlikely hero. "If Stuart Saunders hadn't been on the scene," said Jim Diffenderfer, the PRR official who proposed a new train, "the Metroliner project wouldn't have

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gotten started." Saunders, the railroad's president and later one of the unquestioned villains of the Penn Central bankruptcy, was never known for his compassion for passengers. But with the Penn Central merger in the offing, the reasons for his sudden interest in the Metroliner were not difficult to detect.

If $400,000 gifts to the Republican Party are how corporations like ITT get mergers approved in the Nixon Administration, providing capital for projects like high-speed trains was how things got done in the Johnson years. "I have no doubt," said Bob Nelson, "that Saunders' softness in negotiating the Metroliner contract with the government can be directly related to his feeling that this was one of the things he had to do to get the Penn Central merger approved." Saunders and the railroad weren't sure how much influence Nelson had on the government's decision to approve the Penn Central merger, but they couldn't take chances. The result was what one railroad official called "the worst contract ever negotiated in the 120-year history of the Pennsylvania Railroad."

Step Three—The Man

Despite all the civics-book rhetoric about government being made of laws not men, nothing could be farther from the truth in the quest for a successful project. What is needed is the kind of project director who is called "a tough son of a bitch" but gets the job done. The archetype for this breed was Jim Webb, who ran the Apollo program. Webb's roots were in the oil business of Oklahoma Senator Robert Kerr, but he wasn't a politician. Webb's aim wasn't making friends or keeping bureaucrats happy, it was landing a man on the moon. Webb, like the ideal director, was there from the beginning. No one could tell him, "We used to do it this way"; no one could challenge his authority by claiming a superior

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knowledge of the project. For Apollo began with Webb.

Although his background is far different from the wheeler-dealer world of Oklahoma oil, Bob Nelson shared a number of traits with Jim Webb. Like Webb, Nelson was there at the beginning. A professor of transportation economics at the University of Washington when he was recruited to head the Northeast Corridor Project in 1963, Nelson recalls that he "wasn't very much interested in passenger transportation at that time." Gordon Murray of the Budget Bureau played a key role in selecting Nelson, whom he knew from professional conferences. It also didn't hurt that Nelson taught in the home state of Warren Magnuson, chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee. Little in Nelson's background prepared him for the cutthroat world of bureaucratic infighting, but he had learned the game by 1965 when he became director of the new Office of High Speed Ground Transportation.

Understanding Nelson starts with his own simple admission, "I'm no train buff." Tall and white-haired, more interested in freight rates than railroad memorabilia, Nelson is not the sort to talk about the romance of the train whistle in the night. There is a severity about him, a kind of intellectual Calvinism, which meshes with the frugality of the Metroliner project in an era of cost overruns and inflated promises. Recalling his anger at the failure of the railroad and its contractors to honor their contract for the production of the train, Nelson said, "I'm old fashioned. I believe that commitments once made should be honored. Obviously, that wasn't the way they did things in the railroad business."

Few in the railroad business have fond memories of Bob Nelson. Even today the mere mention of his name in Penn Central offices creates involuntary shudders. When asked about Nelson or the Metroliner, officials of the Budd Company, the project's prime contractor, will only say, "It's a good train and we will not comment on past difficulties."

Jim Diffenderfer, who played a key role in promoting the Metroliner at the Pennsylvania Railroad, chuckles as he recalls how Nelson's name was "poison around here." Now with Penn Central, Diffenderfer said, "I used to be castigated for defending him. The problem with Bob Nelson was that he hated incompetence. He hated guys who didn't know what they were talking about. He'd see right through them and call their bluff."

The railroad's feelings about Nelson are easily understood. Nelson was interested in only one thing—the construction of the Metroliner. In early 1966, for example, he talked to a "federal official" about getting the White House to postpone announcing approval of the Penn Central merger until after Metroliner contract negotiations were finished.

Nelson was equally firm when the PRR's President Saunders announced that the railroad wanted Budd to postpone delivery of Metroliner cars until after the merger because of complicated railroad-stock transfers. "Hell, no," replied Nelson. "It's not the federal government's business what the Pennsylvania Railroad's cash balance is at the time of the merger."

Because the government's contract was only with the railroad and not with the Budd Company, it took Nelson several months to discover that Saunders had ordered the contractor to delay Metroliner production anyway. Nelson said that when he discovered this, "I literally raised hell. For the next three weeks I was sitting on Budd's doorstep. I forced them to put on another production line."

A clear picture of Bob Nelson was provided by a colleague from the Department of Transportation, "He was abrasive, difficult, and terribly obstinate. At times we felt he was either a bloody ass or a genius. Neither are characteristics of an average bureaucrat."

But then, how many trains have average bureaucrats built lately?

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Step Four—Project Autonomy

"I had far more decision-making power than anyone over at the Pennsylvania Railroad except for Stuart Saunders," Nelson recalled.

It's a rare government official who has anything resembling the authority of a corporation president, but this kind of autonomy is needed to overcome bureaucratic inertia. The Metroliner project director achieved it, even after being forced to mesh with two government departments—Commerce and Transportation.

If the Metroliner had been an ordinary project, the scenario Nelson and his small office would have faced in the Commerce Department might have gone something like this:

To negotiate a contract they would have had to call in Department lawyers; to hire an assistant they would have had to go through the Commerce personnel office; to order desks or typewriters they would have had to contact the Department's purchasing office. Each one of these divisions had priorities far different from those of Nelson and his office. If the Metroliner had not been a priority project, the contract with the PRR might have been shaped more by a Commerce lawyer than by Nelson himself. A simple purchase order might have taken months to be executed.

It should be clear by now that any office following its own goals, operating on its own timetable (see step five), can't afford to yield authority to external bureaucratic forces. Nelson managed to avoid most pitfalls of bureaucratic life by obtaining special status for the Metroliner through the support of two successive Secretaries of Commerce. Bob Nelson had freedom of action from the outset, but most administrators aren't so lucky.

In the beginning, the key to Nelson's autonomy was White House support for the Metroliner. Luther Hodges, Kennedy's Secretary of Commerce, had grave and well-justified fears about not being reappointed after the 1964 elections and was understandably sensitive to White House whim. Hodges set the pattern by making every effort to give Nelson free rein. His successor, John Connors, was far more interested in national economic policy than he was in running the Commerce Department, and his preoccupation with White House intrigues permitted Alan Boyd, Undersecretary of Commerce for Transportation, to exercise broad authority. The number of transportation officials within Commerce was few enough so that Nelson's Office of High Speed Ground Transportation acted as an extension of Undersecretary Boyd's personal staff. Boyd, hoping to eventually be named to the new post of Secretary of Transportation, was also sensitive to White House sponsorship of the Metroliner project and gave Nelson virtually a free hand during the critical period in 1966 when the contract with the PRR was under negotiation.

The creation of a new cabinet department is to bureaucrats what the Oklahoma land rush was to homesteaders. A new department means a new hierarchy—with favored projects often directly linked to the secretary's office, where they flourish in the glare of high-level attention. When the Department of Transportation was set up in early 1967, Nelson had hoped to continue his close relationship with Alan Boyd, the new Transportation Secretary. Instead, Nelson's office became a division of the Federal Railroad Administration, almost the equivalent of exile to bureaucratic Siberia.

But in this case, banishment had its compensations. A. Scheffer Lang, the federal railroad administrator, had worked with Nelson in the Commerce Department and was sympathetic to the project. Although isolation might have been fatal if Nelson had had no preexisting relationship with Boyd or powerful friends outside DOT, the new arrangement worked. For one thing, being away from the Secretary's office freed Nelson from the

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distracting political battles which accompany the creation of any new cabinet department. "Perhaps my most important contribution to the Metroliner," said Lang, "was to keep the bureaucrats and the power-grabbers away from Nelson so he could get his work done in peace."

But outside intervention was needed in late 1967 to prevent Nelson's office from being subdivided as part of a DOT reorganization effort. No longer could Nelson count on help from a White House, far too preoccupied with the Vietnam war to notice minor domestic projects. This time, a call from Senator Warren Magnuson (see step seven) to Alan Boyd was all that was needed to keep Nelson's domain intact.

Step Five—A Timetable

Without firm deadlines, the government operates with a languor that three-toed sloths might envy. The space program adjusted for this by having not one, but two deadlines:

1. to get a man to the moon before the Russians; and
2. when it appeared that the Russians were in no hurry to get there, a lunar landing by the end of the 1960s.

Once the bill authorizing the Metroliner passed Congress in 1965, Bob Nelson was in the newspapers (see step six) predicting the trains would be running by October, 1967. Unlike most deadlines, Nelson's public timetable wasn't designed to stimulate the federal bureaucracy, it was meant to motivate the equally intractable railroad and its contractors.

Aware that the railroad's enthusiasm for the project would quickly wane following approval of their cherished merger, Nelson saw the October, 1967, date as a bargaining chip rather than a realistic projection. Since the Metroliner's technical complexity was well beyond the contractors' initial production capacity, the train could never have been ready by the 1967 deadline, even with everyone's full cooperation.

But without the 1967 deadline, 1968 would not have brought a series of public inquiries about why the Metroliner was delayed. Without the 1968 furor, the train would never have been ready in early 1969.

Step Six—Project Visibility

From the outset, the Metroliner was a unique program—it attracted public attention. Newspaper involvement in the project began with Claiborne Pell's scheme for a multistate transportation pact. Lunching in 1962 with Arthur Krock, then *The New York Times*' Washington bureau chief and an old family friend, Pell mentioned his plan as something which might be suitable for *The New York Times Magazine*. Instead, Krock transformed Pell's views into a front-page story and the impact of this article emboldened Pell to take his proposal to President Kennedy.

The public's interest in the Metroliner was not hard to understand. Obviously, a project which could cut an hour off travel time from New York to Washington has more widespread appeal than a reorganization of the field offices of the Manpower Administration. Nelson could effectively stage-manage his public deadlines only because the press took them seriously. In 1967 alone, *The New York Times* ran more than a dozen stories on the Metroliner and its production delays, and the Washington and Philadelphia papers also followed it closely.

Step Seven—Friends on the Hill

Claiborne Pell and Warren Magnuson were not the only senators keeping track of the Metroliner. By 1968 Nelson had developed a rapport with a wide variety of legislators; many were impressed with the clarity of his presentations during budget hearings.

When program delays began to snowball, Nelson decided the time was

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right for that classic scene—the angry congressional hearing. Nelson had nothing to lose by a public airing of the controversy, since even if the hearing backfired, no additional congressional funding was required to complete the project.

If this was the strategy behind the Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearings on the Metroliner in early June, 1968, then Republican Senator Gordon Allott of Colorado played the leading role. The interest of the GOP conservative in a railroad project more than 2,000 miles east of his constituents stemmed from a close working relationship that Nelson had developed with Paul Weyrich, one of Allott's aides.

The Senator also had a political motivation for sponsoring the hearings—he seized upon the Metroliner as an example of the Great Society's inability to even make the trains run on time. But Nelson nonetheless credits Allott's hearings with bringing the "Metroliner into operation a year to a year and a half in advance of what it normally would." The hearings were unusual. Although subcommittee Chairman John Stennis opened the hearings, Allott presided over virtually the entire session (one of the rare occasions since the Democrats captured the Senate in 1955 that a Republican has run a televised hearing).

Even more striking was the tenor of the hearings. Allott, like a Capitol Hill Perry Mason, lined up Nelson and representatives of the Penn Central and the three contractors at the witness table and questioned them collectively. If one man claimed he didn't know the reason for a certain delay, Allott turned to the next and demanded an answer. As a public pillory, it was highly effective. The hearings, like the newspaper stories which preceded them, put pressure on the contractors where it hurt—right in the middle of their public image. It became a question of the lesser of two evils, and finishing the Metroliner was infinitely preferable to continued adverse publicity.

The seven steps are not classified information, but a look at the average federal employee explains why they are so rarely applied. Too many government workers resemble characters out of a Beckett play, sitting at their desks and waiting to be told what to do. Since many recognize the fundamental uselessness of their work, they are hounded by the continuing fear that someday someone will catch on and their jobs will be abolished. Completing anything, therefore, is a threatening experience because each finished task may bring retirement or dismissal one step closer. Sisyphus, eternally pushing the same boulder up the same hill, had the perfect government job. It was endless.

From this it's easy to understand the typical bureaucrat's aversion to goals and deadlines. Goals imply that a project can be completed and timetables—most ominously of all—tell when it will be finished. Visibility is only a step away from evaluation; and anyway, even the most innocent publicity may somehow spark an investigation. A dynamic administrator running the whole show is worse—he may even upset the status quo, being so new to government that he won't take sloth and inefficiency for granted.

Admittedly, project autonomy and friends in the White House and on Capitol Hill have their appeal, but for the wrong reasons. For most government workers, autonomy doesn't mean freedom to get the job done, it means the freedom to be left alone. Friends in high places are just another form of job security—"just let them try to abolish my job, and I'll have half the Congress on their backs in no time."

But not all bureaucrats fit these stereotypes. There are a few eccentrics who really want to get the job done. Finding enough of these governmental mavericks to keep a project going is an administrator's hardest task. And for that there are unfortunately no easy formulas. ■

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MEMO of the Month

CHIEF OF STAFF
Commander Amphibious Force
U.S. Atlantic Fleet
Norfolk, Virginia 23520

01: jrr
10 September 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL PHIBLANT COMMANDING OFFICERS

Subj: Refreshments in wardroom

1. For your information and action as you see fit, I have personally overheard Admiral Bell say many times that he does not like to see kool aid served in the wardrooms of ships. Over to you.

Respectfully,

J. E. McCauley
Captain, U. S. Navy

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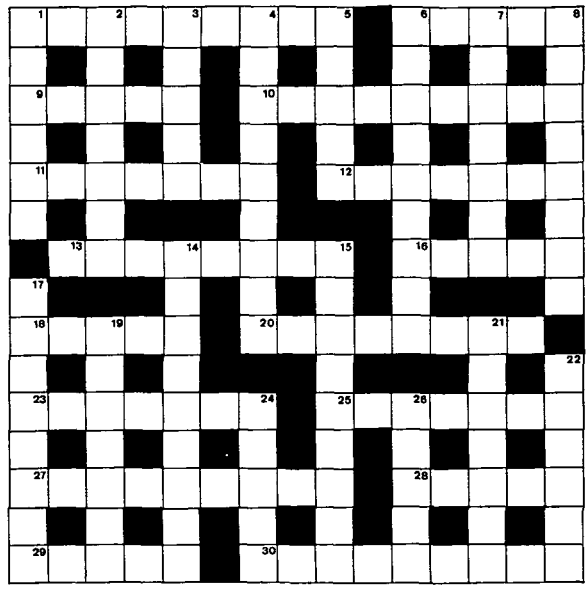
the political puzzle

by John Barclay



ACROSS

1. Will this man sire kings? (9)
6. To put fish away, see and leer back. (5)
9. Spavined, no sin is improved. (5)
10. He raced veto hysterically. (9)
11. Forgiving any Mets their faults. (7)
12. Cat sips milk very irregularly. (7)
13. The girl of Red Sammy. (2, 6)
16. Put the bite on the athletes, not Sal. (5)
18. Coronation site of King Noah I? (5)
20. Soon sour, but resonant. (8)
23. Salad form nips CIA plot. (2, 5)
25. Does nothing, repeat nothing, work here? (7)
27. When Al leaves here, it moves to Europe. (9)
28. William Randolph elevated in Brooklyn. (5)
29. Feb. 22, or Feb. 19 instead. (5)
30. The 50,000,000 test. (9)

DOWN

1. East in Koran refers to Far East. (6)
2. Why events score three and ten. (7)
3. Look in Asia for little independent United States. (5)
4. Heaving of success times tires one. (4, 5)
5. They follow Virginia in fishing. (5)
6. He's a rare catch. (9)
7. In present it less often appears to name. (7)
8. The cloud over Paris talks. (2, 3, 3)
14. Again passes on prim stare. (9)
15. Aid the beat as ten copy. (9)
17. Hand and tail together in S.E. Asia. (8)
19. Stainer approaches closely. (5, 2)
21. This may ruin Mau Mau element. (7)
22. Gender weight makes churchman. (6)
24. Mohammedan official starts big state. (5)
26. Set of morals found in quiet hicks. (5)

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word. Answers to last month's puzzle are on page 44.

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What the FDA won't tell you about FDS

by Joseph A. Page

When feminists are looking for a good illustration of what's wrong with American business, they often point to feminine hygiene sprays. Denounced as both useless and hazardous by doctors and promoted through advertising demeaning to women, the sprays are a classic case of adding injury to insult.

One part of the feminine hygiene deodorant story that has not been explained is the federal government's role. For nearly two years, a combination of weak laws and timid administrators has kept the government from taking the steps necessary to protect the public. The latest installment in this continuing story came in February, 1973, when the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) failed to issue long-expected regulations for the sprays and gave no clue to its next step.

Feminine hygiene sprays are not, as their name might imply, related in any way to health; their only function is to guard against "vaginal odor." That such an odor exists has long been known, but that it is anything but normal was hardly suspected before 1966, when the first of these deodorants hit the U. S. market. The sprays usually contain alcohol, scent, an antibacterial (until recently, the now-banned hexachlorophene), and an aerosol propellant.

The medical world is generally skeptical of the sprays. Doctors stress that routine cleanliness is the best protection against odor; as *The Medical Letter* advised its physician-readers recently, "It is unlikely that commercial deodorant feminine hygiene sprays are as effective as soap and water in promotion of a hygienic and odor-free genital surface." For those who have an odor problem soap can't solve, the sprays may actually be a danger. Physicians point out that odors can be a sign of disease, and that by blocking normal warning signs, a too-assiduous use of deodorant could delay needed treatment.

Deodorant sprays left the pages of *Mademoiselle* and attracted government attention because of their enormous commercial success and the numbers of consumer and doctor complaints that followed. The boom began when Alberto-Culver beat its competitors to the market and introduced FDS in 1966. In short order other sprays joined it, but the real expansion did not come until 1969. Then, in a decision that was to vaginal sprays what the 21st Amendment was to brewers, the National Association of Broadcasters decided to reverse its long-standing rule against televised advertisements for "intimate prod-

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ucts." At least 30 different brands appeared, some seeking distinction by offering "flavors." (Cupid's Quiver, for example, features raspberry, champagne, jasmine, and orange.) Sales jumped from $20 million in 1969 to $67 million in 1971. To convince women of the need for a product which didn't exist before 1966, the four leading manufacturers spent over $8 million on advertising in 1971. A prime target is the youth market. Last spring, one manufacturer offered spray samples for 25 cents to more than a million women in college. Some 209,000 of them responded.

The market fell off in 1972, mainly because hexachlorophene, an ingredient in some of the sprays, received widespread publicity as being responsible for the deaths of more than 30 babies in France. Vaginal deodorant manufacturers have now removed this toxic chemical from their formulas. (A current TV commercial actually seeks to capitalize on this turn of events by advertising that Warner-Lambert's Pristeen is now free of hexachlorophene—although the company had previously done virtually no labeling or advertising to inform the consumer that Pristeen *did* contain the chemical.) *F-D-C Reports*, a trade publication, has quoted an Alberto-Culver official as insisting that the corner has already been turned and that sales of market leader FDS will soon return to 1971 levels.

Medical Problems

If this were merely a tale about the wilder fringes of the beauty industry, we might dismiss the story as one more example of how the American economy keeps people in jobs. But evidence is accumulating that vaginal sprays pose serious hazards.

The risks arise from what the sprays do to the sensitive pubic region. In the few years the products have been on the market, there has not been time to determine whether there are any long-term risks. Experts feel the most serious problems may not be apparent until the sprays have been tested over time. In any event, the short-term medical record is alarming enough. The most common reactions are itching, burning, and rashes, often leading to conditions technically known as cervicitis, cystitis, urethritis, vulvitis, and vaginitis. Once inflammation sets in, it can be persistent; in 18 cases investigated by the government, patients required an average of 30 days to recover.

The government has a responsibility to protect the consumer from hazards like these. The agency responsible, the Food and Drug Administration, has floundered, and the story of its hesitation tells a lot about how government can fail.

Some critics point to sexism as an explanation for the government's failure to take the problem seriously. When Congress, the FDA, and the spray industry are all run by men, they ask, how can women get a fair shake? As one woman commented after a frustrating round with the FDA, the sprays won't be regulated until they are found to cause cancer of the mouth.

Gynecological Grumblings

The Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938 provides the legal framework for FDA authority over the sprays. When the first vaginal deodorants reached the market in October, 1966, there was no regulation requiring that the companies notify the government of this historic event. In fact, the law does not even oblige cosmetics manufacturers to tell the FDA that they are in business, let alone what products they peddle or what ingredients the products contain. There was (and still is) no requirement that companies test cosmetics for safety before marketing them. Only if a cosmetic is adulterated or misbranded can the agency invoke legal sanctions, the most drastic being seizure of the product. But a company can challenge these sanctions in court, and the burden is on the agency to prove that the law

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has been violated.

From the manufacturer's point of view, there is only one complication in this permissive arrangement. Sometimes, under FDA rules, a cosmetic is not just a cosmetic, but a drug as well. If it is, then the FDA can require the product to meet the same standards as other drugs, most crucial of which are pre-marketing safety tests. The line between "cosmetics" and "drugs" is therefore important, but it is also exceedingly fine. The main test seems to be intent: the law states that a cosmetic may be a drug if it is "intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease," or "is intended to affect the structure or any function of the body."

Until the summer of 1971, the FDA called the sprays cosmetics and let it go at that. Then disturbing signs appeared. Complaints from consumers claiming injury from the sprays were arriving at a rate higher than usual for a cosmetic, and there were sustained grumblings from the medical profession. Several letters from gynecologists describing adverse reactions their patients had suffered after using the sprays appeared in medical journals. Fifteen doctors from the student health service at the University of California at Santa Barbara wrote to Virginia Knauer, President Nixon's Adviser on Consumer Affairs, urging that the sprays be withdrawn from the market.

There was also a prod from elsewhere in the government. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), responsible for scrutinizing the product's advertisements, formally asked manufacturers to back up their advertising claims with facts. Under the FTC's admittedly cumbersome procedure, this could be a first step toward issuing complaints about deceptive advertising.

The FDA's response was to meet with industry representatives and ask them to cooperate by voluntarily furnishing the agency with information, including safety-test data. The weaknesses in the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act forced the agency to take this approach. Unlike the FTC, which has legal authority to subpoena information from industry, the FDA must rely on the manufacturers' good will.

On August 12, 1971, Gus S. Kass, vice president of Alberto-Culver, complied with the FDA's request, and several other companies sent information on consumer complaints, ingredients and testing. Warner-Lambert, however, chose not to let the agency see any data, despite ads claiming that Pristeen "has been developed out of intensive research and tested in leading hospitals under the supervision of gynecologists."

The Alberto-Culver material described tests performed on animals and humans to determine irritancy, rate of hexachlorophene absorption, and levels of hexachlorophene in the blood (as well as odor evaluations made by trained "sniffers"). But the company omitted information on how much of the spray normally penetrates to internal areas, which is surprising since millions of women had been using the product for several years.

The Race to the Market Shelf

The reason for this less-than-thorough testing was Alberto-Culver's determination to beat the competition to the market shelf. Warner-Lambert was actually the first company to test-market a vaginal deodorant, but Alberto-Culver won the race to national distribution, advertised heavily, and established FDS as the market leader. The competition has yet to recover.

The commercial success entailed certain sacrifices, one of which was adequate safety testing. When FDA's medical officials looked over the Alberto-Culver test data, they were not pleased. "The information contained in these studies does not contribute anything to our understanding of the injuries reported to

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us," wrote Dr. John Gowdy of the FDA's Bureau of Foods, in a memorandum dated November 24, 1971. Dr. Benson C. Schwartz of the agency's Bureau of Drugs concurred, reporting, "The clinical studies submitted are inadequate and not controlled."

Alberto-Culver put forward the best face it could, especially when FDS was challenged in court. When one woman sued for injuries she attributed to FDS, Alberto-Culver's Gus Kass said in a sworn answer to an interrogatory:

> To determine whether FDS was irritating under use conditions: 31 women *completed* the test over a period of five weeks. The study was conducted under the supervision of a gynecologist. The product was applied to the pubic-vaginal area either two or four times daily. Conclusion: *No* irritation or other abnormality which could be attributed to the use of FDS was observed. [Emphasis added.]

This account makes for an interesting comparison with Dr. Schwartz's description of the same study:

> *Thirty-two* human subjects were started on an uncontrolled study in which each patient was examined by a physician and then given a can of FDS to use either two times a day or four times a day depending on her preference. Each patient was then examined at intervals for signs of irritation or erythema. No smears or cultures were made. Patients were not restricted as to other medications and douches. *One patient dropped out*, leaving 31 subjects. The patient that dropped out did so *because of irritation on the right inner thigh which became progressively worse*, forcing her to drop out of the study after two weeks.
>
> Comment: The company states they found no irritation or other abnormalities which could be attributed to the use of their product. Upon careful review of each clinical report form, seven of the 32 patients showed signs of symptoms of irritation or erythema. *This would give a reaction rate of just under 25 per cent.* Furthermore, if each clinical report form is read, the bias of the examining nurse becomes very obvious as she belittles every positive finding—attempting to blame it on anything but the feminine hygiene deodorant spray. [Emphasis added.]

Recent attempts by public interest advocates to investigate test data sent in by Alberto-Culver and the other companies provoked a flurry of evasive, often contradictory responses at FDA and one unusual result. Shortly after the first request for disclosure, the Alberto-Culver test data was mysteriously and "inadvertently" sent back to the company.

Let the Sprayer Beware

Between these less-than-reassuring tests and the growing pile of complaints, the FDA was being pushed to act. Internal FDA memoranda prepared by scientists in the Bureau of Foods and the Bureau of Drugs during October, 1971, spelled out the dimensions of the safety problem: four manufacturers admitted receiving 383 complaints, physicians reported approximately 30 injuries, and the FDA received 18 complaints directly from consumers.

The usual reported adverse-reaction rate for cosmetics is one per million units sold. On the basis of the above figures, the rate for vaginal deodorants was running about 10 times higher.

With these facts in hand, the FDA had to confront the problem of what action to take. In typical bureaucratic fashion, its response was to hedge.

What happened within the Bureau of Foods illustrates how promptly regulatory proposals can be watered down as they pass through the pipeline. In an "action memorandum" dated October 19, 1971, a medical officer in the Bureau argued for a ban on the sprays:

> I would suggest that products intended to prevent the development of skin odor in the external perineal [genital] area and dispensed from pressurized containers be considered hazardous per se and may not be offered for sale in interstate commerce unless adequate evidence is presented to the FDA that they are safe under reasonable conditions of use. Since no product presently on the market meets these conditions, they should all be recalled and it would be incumbent on those who propose to market such products to determine the

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offending ingredient or ingredients and take such corrective measures as might be indicated to make the product safe.

This drastic proposal must have horrified his superiors, for on the same day, the office of the acting director issued an action memorandum repeating the earlier memo verbatim, but deleting the recall provision and changing the conclusion to find that the sprays "may be hazardous." This left the Bureau of Foods committed to the requirement of warning labels which the first October 19 memo had proposed as "a less Draconian approach."

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Drugs was also studying the problem and suggesting regulatory approaches. An August 4, 1971, memorandum argued that vaginal deodorants were mislabeled and hence subject to recall:

> The claims made for the product are misleading in that: they imply that one spray will prevent odor all day; they state that the product(s) have been tested by gynecologist(s)—an implied claim of medical efficacy; they state that the product "stops odor before it starts," implying prophylactic benefit; they state that the product "keeps you fresh all day every day," implying a change in body function or condition; they imply medical benefit in pathologic vaginal problems which are odiferous and should be treated by a physician. . . . Moreover, in permitting these products to masquerade as cosmetics, we presently allow them to be sold with labeling that is false and misleading, lacking adequate precautionary statements and instructions for use.

Simmons on Sensitivity

A subsequent Bureau of Drugs memo added the point that the terms "hygiene" and "deodorant" are misleading "as they [the sprays] in no way promote hygiene (either cleanliness or health) nor are these products proven or accepted deodorants in this area." But, instead of pursuing this line (which would have acknowledged the Bureau of Foods' jurisdiction over the sprays as cosmetics), the Bureau of Drugs pressed for an agency finding that sprays containing hexachlorophene were drugs. The memo of October 4 spelled out the reasons:

> 1. *The nature of the use*. . . .They are intended to be sprayed on and around the perineal area. . . and quite likely in the vaginal area. . . .
>
> 2. *The nature of hexachlorophene*. . . . It kills bacteria [whose] . . . balance is in fact important to body function. . . . Products which alter bodily function are considered to be drugs.
>
> 3. *Recent serious challenges to the safety of hexachlorophene*. . . .
>
> 4. *The possibility of masking the need for medical treatment*. . . .

Dr. Henry E. Simmons, director of the Bureau of Drugs, spelled this out in more elegant form in an action memorandum dated October 29, 1971:

> The vulva and vagina represent areas of the body that are in a constant state of change. Marked variations occur daily, hourly, and even momentarily under the influence of hormonal stimulation, sexual stimulation, pregnancy, and normal aging.
>
> From a psychological standpoint, a physical standpoint, a cultural standpoint, and a sexual standpoint it would be an understatement to call this a sensitive area.

This was sound medical judgment and plain common sense. Moreover, it led to the inescapable conclusion that vaginal deodorants ought to remain out of the hands of consumers until the manufacturers proved their safety with valid data obtained through sound testing procedures. In other words, the products *should* be regulated as drugs. Whether they *could* be classified as drugs under existing law and its interpretation by the FDA and courts was another matter.

In a September 29, 1971 memo to a medical officer in the Bureau of Drugs, the FDA's newly appointed legal counsel Peter Barton Hutt gave his opinion of how the law had been construed: "Antibacterial agents [such as hexachlorophene] in deodorants are not intended to affect a bodily function or prevent disease, but only to promote attractiveness." He added that "a representation that a product contains hexachlorophene may well be sufficient to classify it

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as a drug claim," but warned that the threat of such a classification would merely induce manufacturers to stop making the claim.

A paper Hutt delivered while a partner in a Washington law firm and general counsel to the cosmetics industry's trade association spelled out the fine distinction the FDA had drawn between a "product that absorbs perspiration or masks its odor, or prevents odor by germicidal or bacteriostatic agents that act upon odor-producing bacteria" (a cosmetic) and a "product designed to reduce perspiration odor by reducing the perspiration itself, through a change in the sweat glands" (a drug).

Slow Down, Don't Move Too Fast

So near the end of 1971 the FDA was stewing busily, but a firm policy decision on the sprays was never reached. Intead, the agency began to move against hexachlorophene because of increasing evidence that the chemical was unsafe. Since most of the sprays contained hexachlorophene, some officials felt that reducing the amount of the chemical might solve the spray problem. This was at best a partial solution, since neither the FDA nor the companies had yet discovered which ingredient actually caused the irritation. In fact, some of the sprays without hexachlorophene caused as many complaints as the rest.

One approach the FDA took was to urge manufacturers to remove hexachlorophene from the sprays voluntarily. On November 10, 1971, FDA press officer John T. Walden said the agency acted because the chemical was not only potentially harmful but unnecessary. "There is no medical justification for [hexachlorophene] in feminine hygiene deodorant sprays," Walden said. Ever ready to pick up the gauntlet, Alberto-Culver President Leonard Lavin immediately sent an angry telegram to HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson and FDA Commissioner Dr. Charles C. Edwards demanding that Walden be fired and claiming that Alberto-Culver had "voluntarily submitted to the FDA scientific findings which completely refute Walden's irresponsible statements." The next day Lavin flew to Washington to meet with Dr. Edwards and repeat his demand. The Commissioner didn't sack Walden, but that wasn't Lavin's real objective. He was out to silence the FDA, and he seemed to succeed, for at the conclusion of the meeting, Dr. Edwards promised he would have no comments for reporters concerning the status of the sprays.

On January 7, 1972, the FDA made its first move, publishing a proposed regulation which, if adopted, would have limited the amount of hexachlorophene in drugs and cosmetics. The use of the chemical in cosmetics could continue only if it served as a "preservative" rather than an active ingredient, at a concentration no higher than 0.1 per cent—and only if manufacturers could not find an alternative preservative. Interested parties were given 60 days to comment.

The FDA never explained the basis for its "preservative" loophole. There was no doubt that the companies were using hexachlorophene as an active ingredient in vaginal deodorants; under this ruling, they could keep on using the toxic chemical in the same amounts as before, calling it a "preservative."

The period for comment expired on March 8, and the usual bureaucratic delay settled over the issue. It took the deaths of 30 babies in France from talcum powder containing hexachlorophene to jar the agency into decisive action. On September 27 the FDA promulgated its final restrictions on the use of hexachlorophene in drugs. The new order retained the preservative loophole and the 0.1-percent limit, but, in response to a written comment submitted by the author and one of his students, it also incorporated a requirement that calculations of the hexachlorophene

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content in aerosol products be made exclusive of the propellant. A letter from an FDA medical officer in *The New England Journal of Medicine* said "evaporation of the propellant may raise the concentration of hexachlorophene to as high as 95 per cent on the skin immediately after application."

The morning the order was published, industry representatives rushed to the agency and met with FDA compliance officers to argue that the propellant should be included in the hexachlorophene level measurement. The industry, which had already planned to remove hexachlorophene from its sprays, was concerned because the ban would prevent it from selling existing stock. The encounter lasted all of 10 minutes. No FDA scientific personnel attended. That afernoon, following a conference with Peter Hutt, a decision was made to accept the industry position—demonstrating that the agency doesn't always act slowly.

Representatives of women's, labor, and consumer groups met with Dr. Edwards to protest the FDA's decision. Though Dr. Edwards refused to budge on the measurement issue, the FDA did modify its final regulation to ban the use of any hexachlorophene in cosmetics which might come in contact with mucous membranes.

A Game of Charades

At the same time, an article in the October, 1972, issue of *Ms.* told readers that Bureau of Foods chief Robert M. Shaffner had predicted that by the time the article was published, the FDA would have issued a regulation requiring warning labels for the sprays.

On October 20, an advisory committee of obstetricians and gynecologists set up to counsel the FDA voted its opinion that the sprays should be considered drugs and that there is inadequate evidence of their safety and some presumptive evidence that they are unsafe.

The agency seemed to be regaining momentum. In late January, 1973, word leaked out that the FDA was on the verge of requiring warnings on spray labels, so that an intelligent consumer would think twice about using a vaginal deodorant.

But in less than two weeks the regulations had once again been delayed indefinitely. Despite all the internal memos and valiant efforts of medical officers within the agency, the FDA persisted in being soft on the manufacturers. The companies can continue to use the word "hygiene" on labels, misleading though it may be; they do not have to warn users to seek medical help if certain symptoms appear; they do not have to give directions that would insure that the sprays are not applied with excessive force (or at too close a range) and in such a way that the ingredients will not reach the vaginal orifice.

While failing to come to grips with the problem of vaginal deodorants, the FDA adopted an elaborate scheme of "voluntary regulations" drawn up by the cosmetics industry to create the impression of adequate self-regulation in order to obscure the need for new legislation. Instead of asking for legislation to strengthen its inadequate laws, or using what powers it could to regulate the hazardous, poorly tested sprays, the FDA has continued to cooperate with the industry in delaying reform.

When reluctant regulators administer toothless laws, the result is a charade at the public's expense. It may be a while before a better illustration of this truism comes along. Congress, by failing even to hold hearings on the subject, has long demonstrated its indifference to cosmetics regulation. Whether the saga of the sprays will ruffle this blanket of neglect remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, the FDA has begun to receive complaints of adverse reactions to a deodorant tampon, and has met with the manufacturer to ask politely for a list of ingredients and safety-test data. And so it goes. ■

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TIDBITS and...

Loyal Republicans

Early subscribers may recall our October, 1969, article on the Seafarer's International Union, in which Jerry Landauer described how foreign seamen who wanted jobs on American ships seemed to take a sudden interest in political philanthropy. Thus, $500 contributions to the union's special political fund came from such people as Jintoku Toma, Jinyu Yariku, Tsubio Kohatsu, Seigi Uehara, Koichi Miyazato, Gunvald Larsen, Oddbjorn Fritzoe, and Lars Alvin. We are sure these dedicated Nixon supporters will be pleased to learn that last year the SIU donated $100,000 to the Committee to Re-Elect the President. The union's officers must have been pretty happy, too, for last May a federal judge dismissed a suit against them—accusing the SIU of using non-voluntary political donations—because the Justice Department had failed to press the case for two years. After what we are confident was careful consideration of the merits of the case, the Justice Department decided—a few weeks before the November election—not to appeal the dismissal. The SIU donation was made the first week in November.

Nuclear Hijacking Updated

In our January issue, we published Timothy Ingram's "Nuclear Hijacking," which pointed out the danger that the nation's inadequately guarded supplies of nuclear fuel could be stolen by criminals or terrorists and turned into home-made A-bombs. The story idea had been kicking around in our offices since the start of the magazine, but the dozens of writers we mentioned it to always seemed to prefer other topics. The reason, we suspect, is that many liberals resist facing problems like this one, where the solutions involve tighter security.

We are glad to see that now something is being done about the nuclear fuel problem. On January 29, the Atomic Energy Commission announced that it was tightening controls over fuel shipments and stockpiles. Under the new rules, the AEC will no longer send large shipments of fissionable uranium and plutonium on normal passenger flights and there will be stricter safety precautions for the fuel that is carried in trucks.

While these proposals are obviously an improvement, many of the dangers pointed out in our article still exist. Nuclear materials will still be carried on cargo planes and other public carriers, and there is still the risk that shipments could be stolen at transfer or loading depots. The design of many nuclear power plants makes it impossible to take proper inventories.

Meanwhile, the Airline Pilots Association has also taken up the issue, advocating banning radioactive substances from commercial aircraft—at least until the safety of mailing containers and special cargo holds is proven. The pilots provide us with another horror story of the dangers of transporting nuclear materials. This tale involved a 1972 Delta Airlines flight which contained an improperly sealed nuclear container which left radioactive residues in the cargo hold, contaminating baggage on 20 subsequent flights.

We are glad, too, that the press is finally picking up this story. On February 4, *The New York Times Magazine* published an article by Ralph Lapp describing the risks of nuclear hijacking and reproducing the Orlando letter reported in our article. In addition, the UPI carried our story, and AP reported the AEC announcement. Unfortunately, the AP article conveyed the impression that the AEC's decision was based solely on hypothetical safety considerations, rather than being a response to actual events.

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Silent Majority

The scuttling of any government project brings its share of snafus, and the abrupt cancellation of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) is no exception. From Houston, Texas, we learn the fate of an OEO program designed to provide dentures for elderly Chicanos. The problem is that the Chicanos had just had all their teeth removed when the money stopped. This is certainly a way to take the teeth out of effective programming.

The Professionals and the Comedian

Last month in this space we reported that lawyers are 7.5 times more likely to commit tax crimes than the average taxpayer. Our confidence in the basic soundness of American society got another boost recently when John Emshwiller reported in *The Wall Street Journal* that doctors are at least seven times more likely to be addicted to drugs than the average man. If his reported estimates are correct, that gives us at least 5,700 physician addicts.

But there can't be anything seriously wrong with a people who can laugh. For instance, on his recent Christmas special from Vietnam and other U.S. military outposts, Bob Hope began one monologue: "The Colonel gave me a shotgun to hunt pheasants with. But I almost got into trouble. I thought he said peasants."

Rain, Sleet, and Dark of Night Department

From Mike Causey's column in *The Washington Post*, January 31, 1973:

The "plum book," a limited-edition guide to plush federal jobs for the politically plugged-in, has rolled off the presses. It is fatter than the 1969 version, and much more interesting thanks to the addition of nearly 2,000 attractive, if little-known, positions in the U. S. Postal Service.

People who think of the Postal Service as the friendly postmaster and his clerks or carriers will be intrigued with the new titles and pay scales now that the USPS is being operated like a business. For instance:

Manager of Creative Services, $25,183 to $33,493.
Civil Defense Coordinator, $18,634 to $24,783.
Social Priorities Specialist, $18,634 to $24,783.
Schemes Routing Specialist, $16,872 to $22,440.
Management Trainees, and Interns, $16,872 to $22,440.
Micromation Specialist, $16,872 to $22,440.
Fringe Benefit Specialist, $16,634 to $24,783.
Suggestions Award Administrator, $22,767 to $30,280.

OUTRAGES

Voluntarism Doesn't Come Cheap

With the volunteer army now a reality, ever wonder what each career soldier will cost the taxpayer? George Wilson of *The Washington Post* asked one of the Pentagon's most experienced budget specialists to compute the cost to the public of one typical soldier who serves 20 years on active duty and then retires. Assuming that pay and benefits continue to rise as they have in recent years, he figures the cost of the soldier to be $1,700,000. If this does not increase support for complete disarmament, it should at least heighten interest in service careers.

One of the nice things about such careers is that as a retired serviceman you can take another government job and keep your retirement pay as well. And the rewards of government jobs are increasingly attractive. The number of Civil Service jobs at GS-14 and above (beginning salary now $23,085 as contrasted with $11,355 in 1958) has more than tripled in the last decade. According to the Civil Service Commission, at least 77,763 civilian government employees are also receiving military retirement pay (the actual figure is certainly much higher, since such agencies as the CIA and FBI weren't included in the Commission's survey). Nicholas von Hoffman calls these people Double Dippers and says, "Only the U. S. government would pay pensions to people who are still working for it."

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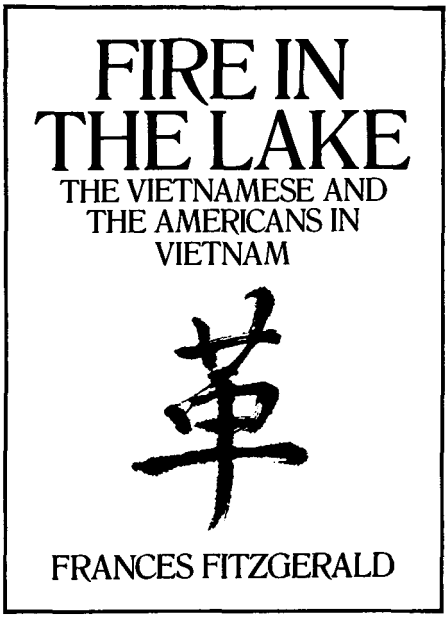
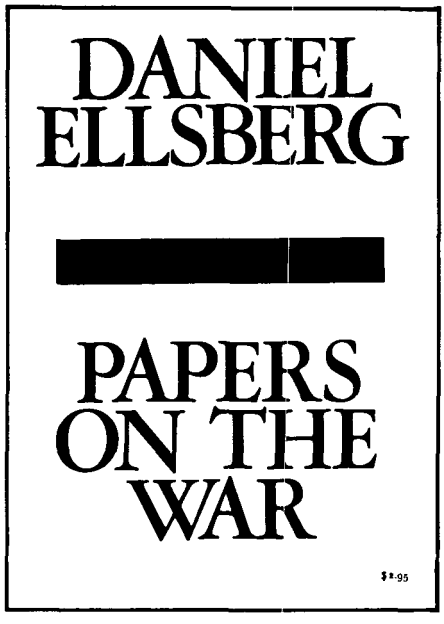
Annual Political Book Award

The Washington Monthly wishes to recognize the best of those books that explore the processes and values of the institutions that govern America, the books that share our purpose of identifying where the system breaks down, why it breaks down, and what can be done to make it work.





The award for 1972 goes to
Fire in the Lake
by Frances FitzGerald
and
Papers on the War
by Daniel Ellsberg

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Halberstam, FitzGerald, and Ellsberg reporter, poetess, and analyst

by Taylor Branch

With a nervous eye on Nixon's trigger finger, we watch the prisoners and the bombers return as the Vietnam aftermath tentatively begins. The aftermath will witness the first efforts to understand the long war in stillness, without its battle noises and rhetorical hogwash ringing in the background, and the flat uncelebration of the cease-fire is a sign that such understanding is still needed. It is not clear whether we will profit from looking back on the bloody stalemate in Vietnam any more than we learned from other anti-communist interventions, such as the consummate failure at the Bay of Pigs or the tidy success in the Dominican Republic. But the stakes are higher now, and, incredibly, books on Vietnam still sell.

Three major reflective books on the war appeared last year. The authors, sensing the public's boredom with political tracts exhorting us out of Vietnam in one way or another, treated the war almost as if it were over. In *The Best and the Brightest*,* David Halberstam speaks as the literate reporter looking back at the war's early years through the sherry glasses and drawing rooms of the nation's great foreign policy managers –McNamara, the Bundys, Rusk, Harriman, JFK, LBJ, Maxwell Taylor, and so on. He finds that the culture of the national security specialists drew them into Vietnam through a combination of hubris and stupidity–like getting stuck to a tar baby, his favorite image of their entanglement. Frances FitzGerald speaks as poetess in *Fire in the Lake*.* She cradles her knowledge of Vietnam in her arms as she explains how the American war dollar shredded up the delicate tissue of Vietnamese culture. By focusing resolutely on what happened *in Vietnam* (as opposed to Kissinger's brief case or Fulbright's hearings or Johnson's pancreas), FitzGerald produced what I think is the best single volume yet written on Vietnam. Finally, Daniel Ellsberg speaks as prophet in his *Papers on the War*.* His is a book of revelations, to and from himself, and it is remarkable that his incandescent spiritual traumas interfere with the brilliance of his writing as little as

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**The Best and the Brightest*. David Halberstam. Random House, $10. *Fire in the Lake*. Frances FitzGerald. Atlantic-Little, Brown, $12.95. *Papers on the War*. Daniel Ellsberg. Simon & Schuster, $2.95.

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they do. His theoretical passages on the behavior of Presidents toward Vietnam are long streaks of crystal lucidity. They constitute one of the first major breakthroughs in understanding the Vietnam policies of the various Presidents and their advisers, and for this you can forgive Ellsberg the clay-tablet effect in the rest of the book.

Halberstam's book is the biggest commercial success of the three, mostly because it is filled with juicy "insider" stories about the famous people involved in the war. Some of the stories, unfortunately, crop up more than once—a reflection of the book's abominable editing. For example, we learn at least three times about how Maxwell Taylor did not resign as Eisenhower's Army Chief of Staff, as those sloppy Kennedy people thought, but actually *retired* from the Army at the completion of his term.

Halberstam the storyteller. Where else can you learn how Lyndon Johnson mortified Mac Bundy, the impeccable Brahmin, by making him deliver briefings to LBJ in the john? ("Mac, come closer... Mac, get in here!") Halberstam manages to catch LBJ whispering to a friend shortly after he became President that the Kennedy assassination was heavenly retribution for the U. S. role in the assassination of Vietnam's President Diem. And he is replete with Averell Harriman stories: at a State Department meeting, Dean Rusk searches furiously for a way to contact a visiting Harold Wilson, while Harriman sits quietly and patronizingly neglects to tell Rusk that Wilson is his house guest.

Halberstam's stories give you the feeling that he got his material from innumerable interviews with second- and third-level foreign service types—those who live and breathe the life style of foreign policy, taking pride in their knowledge of "the players," talking quietly but colorfully of intricate bureaucratic battles, letting you know that they are close to the major figures involved in Vietnam but not "signed on" to the policy. Halberstam cites no sources at all for his material, but I would guess that most of the anecdotes (except, possibly, the Harriman ones) did not come from the principals themselves but from the bright young aides and special assistants a few layers below. The world of Halberstam's sources is full of subtlety and wit, a chessboard with a Kennedy flavor, and the author is clearly attracted to that world, seeking its respect.

Halberstam's stories are sprinkled throughout his portraits of the major Vietnam policy-makers; the portraits are excellent in capturing the essential spirit of the characters. He takes extra time with McNamara, the most powerful bureaucratic adviser to both Kennedy and Johnson. McNamara was a character of awe, of hyperbole—the most rational, most acidic, most efficient, the *toughest*, a vital quality of the Kennedy era. Halberstam concentrates on his penchant for numbers and precision in Vietnam, the mind sliced up into rows of steel. Again and again, he spits out words to capture McNamara's tough logic:

> If you did show a flash of irrationality or support the wrong position, he would change, speaking faster, the voice like a machine gun, cutting into you: chop, chop, chop. You miscalculated here. Chop. You left this out. Chop. You neglected this. Chop. Therefore you're wrong. Chop. Chop. Chop.

Halberstam seems to hold the Vietnam "players" responsible in proportion to their reputations for brilliance. He's fairly sympathetic to LBJ, who was torn on the war and overwhelmed by those smart fellows Jack Kennedy brought in to manage national security. He pities Rusk, the long-suffering lightning rod for public insults. But he really has to wind up and pitch at McNamara and the Bundys. You realize that he is so taken with admiration for the qualities of the Kennedy era, those brains and that class, that he feels he has to fly right into their best arguments and beat them down. In order to be

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accepted in the Kennedy world, and in the foreign policy world of his own sources, Halberstam has to beat the Kennedys on their own ground. Something of a gut fighter himself, Halberstam labors long over McNamara in preparation for the assault, setting him up as the pretended supreme rationalist and then striking at him as the Secretary himself would have done it. No, you cannot win the war, says Halberstam. Chop. Your precious calculations and projections are all nonsense. Chop. You are lying to yourself and to the country. Chop. Therefore, you're a fool. Chop. Chop. Chop. A barrage of pejoratives all fly straight at McNamara's *intelligence*, at his tough mind:

> He could not have been more wrong, he simply had all the wrong indices. . . he never saw nor smelled nor felt what was really there, right in front of him. He was so much a prisoner of his own background, so unable, as indeed was the country which sponsored him, to adapt his values and his terms to Vietnamese realities. . . . He did not serve himself nor the country well; he was, there is no kinder or gentler word for it, a fool.

That's the ball game for Halberstam throughout the whole book—meeting the best and the brightest right there in their tough intellects and showing them to be fools. He tries, half-heartedly, to express sympathy for the moral views of those who were disdained for *not* being tough—for Bowles, "wearing his high hopes for mankind right there on his sleeve," and for Adlai Stevenson, who "was someone to take Jackie to the theater." But Halberstam, like the Kennedys, actually dismissed these men with easy one-liners. He is engaged and challenged by the aura of rigorous pragmatism that followed men like Bundy and McNamara, and he spends the whole book triumphantly exposing their stupidity.

Halberstam sets as his own mission the vindication of pessimism about the chances of success. In effect, it is a tough defense of the pessimism in his own *New York Times* reports of the early sixties, for which he was so

roundly attacked by the Kennedy Administration. It is this carried boldly forward through the whole war—a pragmatic demonstration that victory in Vietnam is not possible, at the expense of believers like McNamara and Bundy. What is striking about Halberstam's criticism of the war is that, by his own criteria, the criticism would be absolutely pointless if we were winning, as we did in the Dominican Republic. He establishes Vietnam as a loser's playground, but beyond that he can say little about the wisdom or morality of our purposes and intentions there. His mission is a very modest one.

Halberstam's image of Vietnam as a tar baby reinforces the idea of the war as a product of stupidity: "In the late fall of 1965 Johnson learned the hard way that the slide rules and the computers did not work, that the projections were all wrong, that Vietnam was in fact a tar baby and that he was in for a long, difficult haul. . . . " This characterization of the war conforms with the classic

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Arthur Schlesinger theory of Vietnam as a quagmire. According to Schlesinger, the leaders of the Administration were drawn in by their belief that each successive escalation of the violence promised success, promised a conclusion to American involvement. Taking it from there, Halberstam asserts that each escalation was grounded in prideful miscalculation—reaching for the knock-out, the Americans foolishly stuck to a tar baby, victimized by their own misguided hopes for winning.

This view is precisely the opposite of Ellsberg's. He documents in great detail from the Pentagon Papers that the American leaders *knew*, at the time of decision for each escalation, that the military steps they were taking did *not* promise success. They knew from their own intelligence that they were conducting an increasingly bloody holding operation to stave off defeat, not to achieve success. They could not face the prospect of humiliating defeat, so they went ahead anyway, fully aware that they were walking into a stalemate and buying time. This may have been foolish, but it was not irrational. What made the leaders seem irrational was their overblown public rhetoric claiming that they would win. They felt compelled to make great claims for their policies, because they could not face the prospect of sending American troops into battle while telling the American public honestly that they realistically expected to take enormous losses just to keep from losing and that no victory was in sight.

Halberstam acknowledges a large intellectual debt to Ellsberg and sprinkles his narrative with Ellsberg-sounding passages about how the Americans were psychically driven by their fear of defeat. And yet the main structure of his book is built around the tar baby image and the Schlesinger quagmire theory. It doesn't make sense.

If Halberstam had focused more on the Ellsberg motive for the war—avoid defeat—he would have made more of his material on another aspect of the Kennedy toughness, the macho equation of toughness with virility that complemented the flinty intellectualism. He has the raw material—from Joe Alsop's praise of John Kennedy as "a Stevenson with balls," to Alsop's challenges to LBJ to prove his manhood by standing up in the crunch, and LBJ's defiant resolution not to be the first American President to lose a war. It's all there in a kind of boy's toughness in "putting up the dukes" quickly and talking about toughness all the time, all the signs of a biting sense of inadequacy. Once we had the slightest commitment to Vietnam, this attitude made instant sissies of anyone in the national security bureaucracy who proposed a course of less violence or who advanced moral arguments against the war. But Halberstam passes over this gut force behind Vietnam to concentrate on winning his intellectual duels with the Bundys and the McNamaras, which are largely irrelevant. I can only conclude that Halberstam has so much invested in the rational battles over optimism and pessimism that he can't bear to leave them, especially when doing so means leaving a field where he can best the Kennedy mystique on its own terms and thus remain part of it.

In the end, Halberstam does not explain how the architects of Vietnam went to war with their eyes open. That is left to Ellsberg. And he doesn't really explain *why* it was impossible for us to win, preferring to anchor his case in the objective fact that we did not. The explaining is left to Frances FitzGerald.

Get Frankie In Here, Quick

"In the *I Ching*, the ancient Chinese Book of Changes," declares FitzGerald, "lie all the clues to the basic design of the Sino-Vietnamese world." She goes on from there to show how the Americans were grievously ignorant of the enormous gaps in culture and values between them-

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selves and the Vietnamese.

This beginning put me off a little because it sounded like the standard contradictory beginning of liberal books on Vietnam: the United States is doomed to fail because the Americans do not really *understand* the Vietnamese, the authors would say, and the Americans are ignorant because they fail to perceive that the Vietnamese are essentially like *this*. The authors demonstrated by their own sensitive knowledge of the Vietnamese people that Americans were congenitally ignorant of those same people. I could imagine a pacification officer in Vietnam reading *Fire in the Lake*, after which he would throw down his charts and yell, "Get Fitzgerald in here!" And Frankie FitzGerald would be dragged in with her *I Ching* to direct the political war for the hearts and minds of the people. If we Americans lack understanding of the Vietnamese, then by God we'll get some understanding from those liberals.

Through the sheer force of her political analysis of the Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam, FitzGerald overwhelms these suspicions against the mongers of understanding. Writing authoritatively from her experience in Vietnam, she sets the conflict indelibly in the midst of a *revolutionary* war—a totally new way of mobilizing and sharing political power, created by the National Liberation Front. It is a revolution against both Chinese mandarinism and French colonialism—two systems which placed Vietnamese peasants in a position of inflexible, automatic obeisance to their government. Against them, the NLF threw up the idea that its soldiers were subordinate to the people and dependent upon them.

How do we oppose this revolution, then, asked the Americans. And the sophisticated ones like Lansdale and Robert Shaplen (and the early Daniel Ellsberg) said that you win the political war by engendering an equally powerful, but non-communist, revolution in competition with the NLF. Through counterinsurgency and the Revolutionary Development Ministry, the U. S. painted the Saigon government as revolutionary in its own right—creating what FitzGerald calls a "Special Forces mystique, the principle behind which was that the Americans could win the war if they imitated enemy tactics." Special "revolutionary cadres," modeled on the NLF, would go out into the villages to eliminate "wicked village notables," set wrongs right, and win the grassroots support of the people.

None of this worked, of course. The "wicked village notables" were usually relatives or corrupt partners of high South Vietnamese officials. And Saigon's cadres had no sense at all of depending upon the villagers. "They were brought up to believe that the people needed them rather than vice versa," FitzGerald writes, "and their faith was confirmed by the fact that their job was to dispense American goods to the people. . . . " Instead of

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depending upon and serving the villagers, the cadres relied upon the United States for money and protection and import goods, as did a large part of the Vietnamese population.

The American-inspired "revolution" was hamstrung by the fact that none of its non-communist aspects, so precious to Americans, had the slightest salience for Vietnamese peasants. They saw the Saigon government as corrupt and haughty, like the old mandarins and the French. More importantly, the Thieu government was *dependent* on the Americans, which meant that it was incapable of drawing strong respect. The villagers might acquiesce in Saigon's authority, but they knew that the Americans would leave some day, undercutting Thieu, and that there would be a whole new struggle for the Mandate of Heaven. They would accommodate the NLF and the North Vietnamese, who continually found men willing to die for the cause of their revolution.

The United States was trapped. It could withdraw and watch the Thieu government collapse from weakness. Or it could come into the war on the side of the "revolutionaries" in Saigon, who would inevitably become politically weaker the more they depended on the Americans and associated with the foreigners. Meanwhile, American dollars and arms ripped through the Vietnamese society, tearing up its people with firepower, and tearing up its values with whorehouses and refugee slums and Polaroid cameras.

FitzGerald's writing is rich. When she finishes discussing what has happened to the people in Vietnam, you feel you have a sense of what's going on inside all the various groups—the American officials and soldiers, the NLF, the South Vietnamese Army, the villages. You have a feel for both the extraordinary motivation and organization of the NLF and for the corruption in the Thieu government.

By the end of the book, you can predict subsequent developments, because the pieces fit together. This comprehensiveness seems like a reward for FitzGerald's sticking to Vietnam, for not bubbling off to Washington to take the pulse of national leaders who were thousands of miles from the effects of their policies. There was a powerful but camouflaged impact on the other end of all those LBJ orders and McNamara memos, and *Fire in the Lake* is a vitally important ground-level view of the awesome effect that even bumbling governments can have on lives and reality far away from those who make the decisions.

The CIA has always said that things have looked bad in Vietnam, and so have scores of reporters. But somehow the blasts of analysis and reporting never tell you how the people will react when the computer sends a shiny new cadre into their village. FitzGerald makes the culture vivid, the people alive and believable. She accomplishes on the vast stage of Vietnam what few writers can achieve in describing a single incident. The color of her writing adds something rare to political analysis—the strong smell of reality. It is something in very short supply within both government and the publishing world.

Pulling Out—After the Election

FitzGerald de-idealizes what the United States accomplished in Vietnam. That has been done before, and she merely does it better. But Daniel Ellsberg pulls off something new. He de-idealizes the *intentions* of the American war leaders. He finds that their driving motivation was not a principled desire to assist South Vietnam but a fear of defeat—of a McCarthyite backlash at the polls, of backing down into humiliation, of admitting error. Thus, President Kennedy told Mike Mansfield that Vietnam was rotten and that he would pull the United States out of the war, but that he could not afford to do so until after his reelection. In the meantime, he would escalate as slowly

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as necessary to avoid defeat. Some noble purpose.

This is compulsive behavior, but not irrational. In fact, Ellsberg's book contains a brilliant essay called "The Quagmire Myth and the Stalemate Machine," in which he builds a model to show the rationality and predictability behind each escalation over the last 20 years. All the American Presidents, he says, were caught between two conflicting rules. Rule 1: Do not lose South Vietnam to communism before the next election. Rule 2: Do not commit the U. S. to a land war in Asia, either. Squeezed between these two pressures, the Presidents would inevitably choose a course that promised to hold off defeat at the lowest cost. The price of victory was so high—if it was deemed feasible at all—that the President always selected a military plan inadequate to win but adequate to keep from losing—hence Ellsberg's "Stalemate Machine."

The theory is so tight that even the Presidents' lying and news management become rational. No President could win public and congressional support for a military conflict in Asia by stating honestly that he knew his program would most likely produce a stalemate. So there was one tortuous course available:

> The President's resolution of the conflicting demands and constraints upon him called for suppression of any indications of possible inadequacy of the programs he proposed. The penalty for frankness could be to ally against his programs those who might conclude they were not worth attempting at all, and those who would condemn him for not doing much more. Yet the latter could be expected to oppose him if he did ask and do much more, unless he won quickly, which he did not expect; and the former would desert him, he suspected, if he took their advice and lost Vietnam. Honesty, it appeared, would only earn him opposition whatever he did, and sooner than otherwise.
>
> Yet, internal analyses, estimates, reports, planning, recommendations, all indicated that in a variety of ways these chosen programs were inadequate. Thus all these documents and opinions had to be concealed, by secrecy and deception.

At first, Ellsberg did not oppose the war because he thought it was immoral or unworthy, but because he concluded—as did Halberstam—that it was unwinnable. ("Once I had concluded, in 1967, that we were not going to succeed in Vietnam," he writes, "I worked actively toward ending our involvement.") But what came to obsess him upon reading the Pentagon Papers was the very consistency of American policy over 20 years. Halberstam was staying busy writing about how stupid our policymakers were for thinking they could win, but Ellsberg saw that *they knew they weren't on the path to victory but went ahead, anyway*.

Ellsberg's whole existence depended on the assumption that the President and his advisers needed information and ideas from people like himself, good purposes being fed by professional rationality. If the war was winnable, Ellsberg the true believer would be there with strategies. If the war was impossible, Ellsberg would be there battling with his data and his formulations to convince the President. But the Pentagon Papers showed that all this analysis was unnecessary. The President had all the information he needed; he was just not trying to *win*. This dealt a double blow to Ellsberg. The true believer in him was shocked to find that our purpose was not to bring freedom's blessings to South Vietnam but to deny South Vietnam to communism out of crass fear, even if it meant obliterating the civilian population with potshot air power. Also, Ellsberg's rationalist ego learned that he, the Analyst, was irrelevant, because the Presidents already had the insight he was trying to give them. Ellsberg changed radically, he writes, when "the Pentagon Papers revealed to me that *the President was part of the problem.*" Already having revelations, the analyst was becoming the prophet.

Ellsberg finds his own leaders so

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psychologically intent on avoiding the final "loss" of South Vietnam that, even as late as 1969, Henry Kissinger would eliminate "withdrawal" from the "comprehensive list" of options available to President Nixon. When the war was a "problem," Ellsberg worked on it with his analysis. When he saw that it was a criminal mania for pride and manhood, he opposed it just like the zealots who kept it going—that is, from the gut. This has made him unrespectable in the tough, cerebral world of Halberstam's sources—an extremist convert, a little unbalanced, they say with some truth—but it is hard to fault his argument.

The moral edge in Ellsberg's writing cuts sharply because it follows so logically from the analysis in his "Stalemate Machine." President Nixon realized, he says, that to comply with Rule 2 (avoid big wars in Asia) he could merely reduce those parts of the war most salient to the American public, such as U. S. casualties and draft calls. Relying on air power would mean greatly increased civilian casualties and refugees among the Indochinese, but that would be all right because Rule 1 required only that we keep the communists from marching into Saigon—it did not mean that we had to do anything for the rest of the population, such as letting them live. The number of dead, wounded, and homeless Indochinese is simply *not a factor relevant to our Vietnam policy*, exclaims Ellsberg, and no American President has ever asked for an estimate of the number of non-Americans likely to die from his policies. Rule 1 is too important. Such obliviousness to cost (even someone else's cost) might be acceptable if we were fighting for survival or some noble ideal, but we never did. Our Presidents and their principal advisers knew that they were fighting a negative, almost spiteful, war of denial; but they went ahead because they couldn't help themselves. Limitless killing for a shady goal looks like murder to Ellsberg.

Halberstam upbraids the national security managers for not knowing what they were doing. Ellsberg's anger grows out of precisely the opposite belief—that they *did* know what they were doing. His analysis shows that the most fruitful area for a character study like Halberstam's is that piece of grit in the policy-makers' livers that made them want to win, and defiantly refuse to acknowledge that they couldn't.

Beyond that, Ellsberg's book indicates that governmental reform is much more difficult than just forcing the right information up to the person in charge. It's not simply that top officials are deceived or inadequately informed, for in Vietnam they could clearly see where they were going—and they still slid right along the rusty knife. Perhaps they would have reconsidered their gritty pride if they had known it would be exposed as the naked motive for the war, if they had known that the public would learn all about their knowledge and their cynicism in Vietnam. That's why Ellsberg is a secrecy freak.

The first round of books of understanding on the Vietnam war is over, with much success. The Reporter has delivered a chunky volume of enjoyable stories and yarns. Unfortunately, it is organized around a series of dusty quarrels—can we win, who is smarter? This does no credit to his acuity—but that is not necessary for a book to sell well. The Poetess has landscaped our failures in Vietnam, and knitted our images together —chunk, say, a little more U. S. economic aid into Vietnam and you can watch it reverberate through the system, invariably to everyone's detriment. And Ellsberg has laid bare the gritted teeth and the emotional, cornered men behind our Vietnam policy. There's still room for a psychoanalytic book on what drove them to pay such a high cost in blood and innocence for a stalemate.

It's much easier to argue about these reflective matters when we aren't bombing anybody. ●

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'The Hidden Injuries of Class'

by Suzannah Lessard

There has been a lot written about work in America in the last year, and much of the literature circles around an unanswered question: what is the real cause of the discontent which plagues work life? The concrete problems, like job safety or monotony on the assembly line, have been plainly identified, and practicable ways of dealing with them are beginning to take shape. But while no one feels the discontent would vanish with these problems, it's hazardous to venture beyond the simple issues because the field is boundless, taking in the most basic questions of human needs, psychology, and happiness, and because so often the soluble problems are entangled with plain, tough, unalterable facts of life.

Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb have ventured directly and courageously into this uncharted area. Their excellent book, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*,* comes closer to grasping the heart of the problem than any other attempt I've seen. Their focus is primarily on the blue-collar, or "working-class" person, his low self-image, and the sources of that image. The authors' thesis is that the problem these people have is a deep wound society has inflicted on their self-esteem. With the passing of the aristocracy, they point out, ability has replaced birth (as well as station) as the measure of worthiness. While extending hope where before there was only resignation, this new "equality" has had a cruel twist, namely that if you hold a lowly position, you have to blame yourself. You can point to the disadvantages with which you were burdened, but you cannot dispel the final sense that if you had "it" in you, you would have done better, that compared to you, the people who have "done well" are not just richer

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**The Hidden Injuries of Class.* Richard Sennett, Jonathan Cobb. Alfred A. Knopf, $6.95.

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but more complete, more realized, in every sense "better" people.

The book's documentation, which is based on conversations with 150 working-class Bostonians, rests heavily on 11 intimate portraits. The portraits serve as cornerstones for an analysis which ranges far beyond the supports of documentation but which is careful and honest and convincing. I will touch on some of the most important ideas here, though without trying to draw the intricate connections between them.

The Bell-Shaped Curve

Many of Sennett's ideas (he wrote most of the book, while Cobb contributed through research) have had considerable exposure, but they gain new force in the context of his thesis about injuries to self-esteem. Sennett points, for instance, to the glorification of intelligence as the supreme human virtue and the commonly accepted picture of humanity as bell-shaped in terms of intelligence, with only a few at the top.

Intelligence rating is based on a comparative scale, forming an elaborate inter-occupational social hierarchy which is extremely demeaning to those on the "bottom." A person's value is judged almost exclusively in terms of comparison to others. Therefore, one values oneself according to what others see—what they read in one's badge. The terrible consequence of this way of perceiving yourself (through other people's eyes), particularly if you are a man, is that you come to believe that "what you have to give the people you love depends on how the world sees you." In other words, the linkage of worthiness with badges of ability goes far beyond the economic or even social sphere to worth in the sense of what one has to give one's spouse and children and closest friends.

Sennett considered this the ultimate undermining of self-esteem. To show "what happens to people when they wear badges of ability," he draws on a study of courtship:

> He tried to validate his self to Mary by showing he had abilities and qualities that marked him off as an individual from the crowd—his taste in records, his opinions about politics, his skill at tennis. "I felt," said Mary, "he was so involved in showing how good he was, in proving himself, he wasn't really noticing me."

Investment of intense hope in one's children is the genesis of another insidious pattern. "Sacrifice is the last resource for individualism, the last demonstration of competence. . . it is the final demonstration of virtue when all else fails." The children, however, do not ask for these sacrifices, yet are expected to give something in return—to "make something of themselves." This burden not only to gain esteem for themselves but to rescue it for their parents breeds "a malaise among these kids greater, though more inarticulate, than the discontent of the glamor children of the 1960s." Some of them balk, and the parents feel mortally betrayed. Others, like Patrick Flanagan, son of a shipping clerk, pick up the structure of values with a vengeance. Flanagan, a college student, is interested in computers. "Once I get into a position like that, I can really be me, really do some good, because whatever I think *should* happen, it'll at least be all on my own shoulders to make it happen."

There is no room for failure in this context because there is no separation between a person's innate worth and his occupation-ability rank.

The Culture, Not the System

My quarrel with this book is not with any of these points, but with an overall cast the authors give to the subject which I find at odds with the best of the material. The villain, Sennett believes, is "the system." In general, the personification of the system as antagonist has reached the point of limited value, the point at which it is more likely to block the mind than to enlighten. But it seems

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particularly unhelpful when applied to these psychological subtleties in the work life of an affluent, modern age.

I don't see a crime perpetrated in this book. I see startling evidence of a failing, a collapse, a cultural dilemma—not a system exploiting some for the benefit of others. Culture is a kind of knowing how to live, knowing how to be at ease with oneself, others, life in general, and perhaps most of all, having a clear, workable set of values. That is what these people do not have. And not only are they lacking, but so is the middle class, the supposedly "united" and "autonomous" people whose lives they wish to emulate. This book is about class as much as it is about work, and for that the authors should be congratulated. Class is a major factor in American life which has been avoided in most recent social literature, and they deal with it accurately, honestly, and without condescension. But Sennett narrows and distorts the book, not by limiting himself to analyzing one class of people, but by doing so in a context of class warfare of some sort, without acknowledging it. The shocking idea in this book is how garbled the concepts of human worth have become, and how debilitating this is for the people affected. The impression Sennett leaves is of people stuck in a limbo, having abandoned viable foundations for a very vaguely defined, middle-class dream which they don't much like when they touch it, but with which, as far as dreams go, they are stuck. Just so, they are stuck with a set of patently unworkable and high-priority values, such as the "prestige" attached to the finely gradated job niches, or dubious concepts of what is the most important thing they have to give their children or expect of them. Though the actual injuries to self-esteem may not be so direct or acutely felt on other levels, many of the misperceptions (of self and others), coercions, divisive factors, and states of helpless dependence on phony values are at least as much if not more influential in the classes above.

The tendency to link intelligence (in the I. Q. sense) to innate worth, for instance, seems to me to get stronger as you go up the income scale (with the possible exception of the very rich), as does careerism—the burning need to "distinguish" oneself, and the counterpart feeling that anything short of distinction is failure. In her review of David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest*, in the January 25 *New York Review of Books*, Mary McCarthy accused Halberstam of being excessively interested in "career terms" because he refers to people who did perfectly well, though not exceptionally, as either having failed or having been brutally stifled (usually for a good deed such as telling the government an unpleasant truth). These "casualties" to honor actually lead productive, not to mention affluent, lives in positions most of us would have to call prestigious compared to our own. McCarthy writes:

> It occurred to me finally to wonder what *had* happened to the one-star General York [who angered authorities with pessimistic reports about Vietnam]. . . . So I looked him up in the 1968-69 *Who's Who* and found. . . that he is serving—or was four years ago—as commanding general of the XVIII Airborne at Fort Bragg, with the rank of lieutenant general. In other words, he not only had not been destroyed, but had had a promotion.

She discovered that State Department officer David Nes, another supposedly outcast truth-teller, was promoted and served as Minister in Cairo from 1965 on and had, in fact, "already been raised to the rank of Minister in Saigon (where he served until 1965) at a time when Halberstam places him back in Washington being given 'the strong feeling that no one wanted to touch anyone who angered the military, that if the military turned on you, you were dead.'" "It is true," McCarthy goes on to write, that when my *Who's Who* went to press, he had not reached the rank of Ambassador, although he was

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51 or 52 years old. In career terms, which in my view interest Halberstam excessively, how dead is 'dead' ?"

Is Fort Bragg Death?

I quote this at such length because it pinpoints so clearly the exaggerated notions, automatically accepted by most of us, of the value of "making it to the top," the interpretation of success so clearly in terms of career niches, and worst of all perhaps, the disdain for the perfectly good, hard-working career on middle ground. True, regardless of the promotions, Fort Bragg and Cairo are greater letdowns as assignments than McCarthy admits here. But on the other hand, they are not unworthy posts. "Dead" to Halberstam means anything short of the big time. There is tragedy in the York-Nes stories, which is that government is afraid of the people it needs most and doesn't promote them to positions of power. But the tragedy for York and Nes personally is less clear. They behaved with integrity. History has borne out the truth for which they risked their careers, and they have, for all we know, lived fairly normal, well-off lives ever since. They can tell their grandchildren about themselves with a great deal more pride—self-esteem—one would think, than the officials who didn't listen to them. If limiting one's horizons to an "ordinary" but worthwhile job is considered too high a price to pay for honor, then our values have failed us worse than we thought.

The Halberstam example is also apt because the book is a class book about a class administration. I don't mean that Halberstam is a snob, just that the perspective from which he writes is as a member of the elite, familiar with its particular tastes, standards, and images of worthiness and esteem. The Kennedy Administration was definitely a class—and classy—administration, drawing its talent not just from the intellectual cream, but the social cream as well. As one of them, Halberstam questions what went wrong when the cream of his peers rose to power. I have no criticism of Halberstam's approach: I think it is absolutely valid, though perhaps of limited interest, because I don't think people outside the elite feel quite the same sense of dumbfounded, painful astonishment that such high-class characters would make such a mess.

The craving for distinction about which Sennett and Cobb write is actually far more characteristic of the upper classes than working-class people. With the former, the value or desirability of the badges of ability and distinction, is an absolute diehard belief, equated almost with having a soul, since anything short of distinction is looked upon as a kind of nonexistence. No matter how appalled you might be by Vietnam, probably when all is weighed, it is better, according to this set of values, to have suffered McGeorge Bundy's tragedy than David Nes's.

Outside of elite circles, on the other hand, obscurity is not a defeat at all. Nes and York would hardly be regarded as pitiable, fallen stars there. On the contrary, the ordinary is highly valued: a desire to merge with the white-collar world is not what one would call a craving for distinction. The obsession with the bell-shaped graph and the terror of vanishing into the center of the bell is far more characteristic of the upper classes than the lower.

Security, Not Stardom

But if the people in *The Hidden Injuries of Class* do not crave stardom, they unquestionably believe in the gradations of job positions and the badges of ability which go with them, and they share with the upper classes a propensity to substitute those badges for genuine self-estimation, or evaluation of the work to which the badge is attached. The exaggerated craving for distinction is perhaps just an outgrowth of this more profound imbalance; in any event, belief in

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prestige/ability labels is a disease which flourishes in all classes. Jonathan Cobb, in an afterword, suggests that the way to eliminate this attitude is to eliminate all gradings, or comparative measurements:

> The uses of ability, of development... are political questions, questions about which the ruling class in any age sets the standards. Because of their monopoly in this regard, because their particular values appear as universal, it becomes a matter of having "ability" or not having it, rather than of having... different abilities. To be caught in a scheme of particular values, to live under the terms set only by others, is to feel inadequate in relation to those others.

Again, I disagree that this is a matter of oppression of one class by another, but disregarding that difference, I don't think that saying all abilities are equal solves the problem. For one thing, it defies reality. While the wildly varying degrees of respect which some occupations enjoy in different countries reveals how arbitrarily we choose some of our most favored professions, it remains that some abilities are more essential or more difficult to develop than others, and that some people within the same profession are more able, by any objective standard, than others. This will always be a self-evident, unquellable truth. As far as problems of self-esteem, in the most personal sense, go, the point is not that all abilities are equal in value, but that such skills don't tell us much about the personal quality of the surgeon, or the street sweeper, or the bank clerk. As far as a healthy attitude towards work is concerned, I think Cobb's solution is also misconceived.

The Misplaced Meatcutter

The most insidious tendency of grading—whether it be of jobs or school assignments—is that much of it has no relation to the real value of the work. Half the middle-class jobs Sennett and Cobb's people so eagerly reach for are useless, although the jobs possess a badge of status, supposedly representing ability. One of their subjects, Frank Rissarro, ex-meatcutter, presently classifying loan applications in a bank, is dejected for precisely this reason: he knows his hard-won position is actually worthless. "These jobs aren't work where you make something—it's just pushing papers." In fact, his working-class habits are in a way the only redeeming quality for his self-image. "The other fellows, because they got an education, sneaks out early and comes in late. The boss knows I'm there, a reliable worker." In terms of objective worth, a day of meatcutting is probably a more substantial contribution than a month of the bank job.

Making Zsa Zsa Run

Sennett and Cobb write about badges of ability, those arbitrary labels people acquire which signal, mystically, the "level" to which that person belongs (the level of work and also the level of human being). Rissarro has acquired a badge of ability, but he is uncomfortable because he doesn't feel there is anything behind it. The illusion of superiority with no substance is an everyday fact of our society. The Gabor sisters probably take the prize, and we have all known people who have somehow made themselves into important, glamorous people, though when you look for accomplishments, you are hard put to find them. Perhaps more drab, but in the same category are the hordes in ephemeral jobs in the white-collar world.

Phony credentialism is a deeply corrupting disease, and a vicious one, too, particularly for the Frank Rissarros who were led to believe that with the badges would come spiritual growth and well-being as well as prestige. But none of this means that there is no such thing as grades of competence. Since the differences between categories of skills—surgeon vs. bricklayer—are very clear, there is little point in grading them comparatively. The differences are plain

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enough. Within a field, however, real evaluation of individual work is absolutely essential. First, nothing is more inimical to the cult of phony badges than real evaluation. Nothing would make the Gabor sisters run faster. Secondly, anyone who is really interested in what he is doing wants it evaluated for quality against what other people can do. This interest isn't necessarily competitive—it's just a need for information in straining to develop one's ability to its highest potential; the need to draw back the veils of credentials, praise, success—or the opposite—which get in the way of one's own perception of the value of what one is doing. In the end, real evaluation can only be made by oneself, but for almost every kind of work, it has to be made in comparison to others' work, according to standards based on the best that human beings can do in whatever field. Otherwise, you retreat into a fantasy world as divorced from reality as the badge game.

Tearing Badges From Our Minds

Few of us would not shudder, at least a little, at the thought of genuine evaluation of our work. The nefarious little influences and indulgences of badgism strike practically everyone's self-image, weakening the foundation of self-esteem and making evaluation threatening. There is an ideal state of mind in which one concentrates only on doing whatever's at hand without the distraction of badges. The state is ideal not only because the best work is likely to be produced in it, but because people are likely to be happiest in it, most assured, solid-feeling, relaxed about themselves. Most of us crack from time to time and cast our self-image in terms of the badge that's been pinned to us, or we look into other people's faces to see how they react to the badge. But there is a line and most people are on one side or the other—set principally either on "making it" or on "doing it." One picks up which side a person falls on pretty quickly, intuitively, but there is no surer way to test it than to watch how he reacts to questions which lead in the direction of genuine evaluation.

How one relates to what one does, and how one looks at oneself in relation to what one does, are matters of character, habit, values, but also culture. Making a difference between esteeming yourself and esteeming your work is also a matter of something learned, drawn from the society and its ways of esteeming human beings in general. Our culture not only fails to encourage this distinction, but actually lures people into believing totally in the phony badges. So total is the inculcated belief for someone like Frank Rissarro that he sees no alternative—just an empty label—which he knows is meaningless but cannot let go of because the other option (going back to meatcutting) is socially repellent to him, associated as it is with low esteem. Rissarro is stuck in a job where he really has little choice but to rely utterly on the badge, on what people think. There isn't anything else in what he does to rely on.

This is the point at which the problem becomes "the system" because so many of the white-collar, esteem-associated jobs are mostly nonsense, leaving their occupants no choice but to rely on the badge. One point to start attacking this problem is from within oneself—with one's own work and values, and principles of self-esteem—but the other, the opposite pole, is the work field itself. On a broad scale, the real work has to be sorted out from the nonsense according to its bedrock worth. For the moment the odds are against all of us, from Frank Rissarro to David Halberstam, developing any clarity or certainty about ability and the distinction between ability and human worth, because the bedrock worth is lost in a huge mountain of garbage—badges, labels, celebrityism, snobbery—with the Gabor sisters dancing on top. ■

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Busting our mental blocks on foreign aid

by James Fallows

During the fall of 1971 my wife and I were living in West Africa, working with Ghanaians on construction projects in the bush. Shortly before we were to head back to a more familiar life, news came that the U. S. Senate had voted to cut off foreign aid programs, apparently as a slap at the President's war policies.

For several months, we had lived with two irreconcilable visions of the world: with one half of our minds, we remembered the abundance and waste of American life; with the other, we propelled ourselves through the days, waking in huts without water or lights, walking through towns in the sun, eating the same meal of rice and yams a hundred times. One scene captured for me the human cost of that kind of life. In a rocky region above the town of Winneba, a woman and her several children worked from morning until night, digging stones from the ground with sticks. Later they sold the stones by the hundredweight for building projects. They were there, stooping and digging, each day we were in the region, and they are probably there now.

To Africans who asked, we said that someday there might be a different relation between our two countries. American companies would pay higher prices for the raw materials they exported, and England and the United States would stop collecting interest payments from Ghana for debts run up in the gay old Nkrumah days. In the meantime, the Senate vote came. After hearing of it I

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walked, literally amazed, through the desert town of Bolgatanga, wondering what delusion could have made Americans feel they no longer had anything to share with the world's poor.

Few of my friends at home seemed to understand this feeling. They said that the Vietnam experience had soured them on foreign aid, and they disliked anything smacking of cultural imperialism. Yet enough of them—when confronted by dramatic images of suffering from Biafra and Bangladesh—experienced, at least momentarily, enough of what I felt in Ghana to lead me to write this article.

Wallace and the Literati

Conservatives have been complaining about foreign aid for years. When George Wallace used to make speeches denouncing money-wasting boondoggles in the no-good little countries, the theme was in perfect harmony with his attacks on welfare loafers. And anyone who has followed Rep. Otto Passman's record as an appropriations subcommittee chairman for foreign aid would have been shocked if his 1972 report were much different from this:

The International Development Association wanted $640 million. We denied them that and gave them $320 million. . . . The Asian Development Bank wanted $100 million; we did not give them a dime. The Inter-American Development Bank wanted $836 million; we only gave them half of that. What better record could a committee make?

The anti-aid alliance between Wallace and J. William Fulbright, or Passman and the New York literati, has been explained by Senator Frank Church, in a forceful speech expressing the soured-liberal viewpoint.* Church said that aid's failure is "not technical and administrative, but conceptual and political, and can be understood only as an aspect of the larger failure of American foreign policy over the last decade. . . . I can no longer cast my vote to prolong the bilateral aid program as it is now administered."

Church has a point. Since its beginnings, the foreign aid program has illustrated the dangers of doing the right thing for the wrong reason. During the fifties and sixties, aid supporters thought that the program might be easier to sell if it were advertised as part of a holy war against the Russians. The trouble with this compromise was that no one bothered to bring up the real reasons for giving aid, and liberals were trapped into supporting military aid for its own sake. After a while, if you looked where the money was going, more was being spent for machine guns and tanks than for constructive, humanitarian projects.

While one may find petty flaws in Church's argument (for example, he laments at one point that our aid dollars could not buy us UN votes when we needed them against Red China), there is a more fundamental problem here. "It is astonishing, in retrospect, how little we questioned the seeming verities of the cold war during the 1950s and 1960s," Church says. It is equally astonishing how little Church and his allies question the seeming link between foreign aid

*in *Development Today*. Robert Hunter, ed. Praeger.

Answers to February puzzle.

F	L	I	G	H	T	S	T	O	H	A	V	A	N	A
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and the cold war. Is our only choice really between giving aid to anti-Communist dictators, and not giving it at all? Church implies that it is. Despite a few throwaway lines about reforming aid programs by channeling them through the UN, the thrust of his speech is to stop aid now, and worry later about finding something to replace it.

Church is too smart not to see the implications of his words, so what he leaves out of his speech is as important as what he puts in. When other government entities (such as the Subversive Activities Control Board) have outlived their original raison d'etre, their supporters have come up with ingenious new reasons for continuing them. Presumably, Church could have done the same if he thought the cold war was the problem and not aid itself. He might, for example, have praised the parts of the aid program that have done unequivocal good, such as the famine relief shipments that kept India fed during the sixties, or the similar project now under way in Bangladesh.

Church, however, was certainly not hunting for a motive to replace cold-warism. He ended his speech not with an agonizing meditation about how we should improve the aid system, but by saying, "Essentially, the question is whether we're prepared to recognize the limits of our own capacity. . . and allow nature to take what may well be an uncongenial course in many countries in the third world."

While this sounds like a disinterred Malthus stalking through Congress, it points toward the second apparent reason for the liberal defection from foreign aid: completely apart from its cold-war orientation, there is the disheartening fact that our aid has done little discernible good. The latest evidence is in a forthcoming book by William and Elizabeth Paddock, *We Don't Know How.**

**We Don't Know How.* William and Elizabeth Paddock. Iowa State University Press.

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The Paddock clan—brothers Paul and William, and William's wife Elizabeth—is an eccentric group, producing incisive books that are always queered by a touch of the berserk. Their crackpot wisdom prevails again in *We Don't Know How*. Before the book loses its way in tirades against the Rockefeller Foundation and a missionary doctor who has let himself become a media hero, it makes one point brilliantly: our aid programs are as badly run as any other part of the bureaucracy, and they have done very little good. In country after country, the Paddocks show how aid administrators have made the same mistakes for years, conducting studies and setting up projects, without having much impact. As administrative critics, the Paddocks have few peers. They are especially sharp in showing how aid programs suffer from those classic bureaucratic hazards, institutional amnesia—"AID has no memory"—and information block (see excerpt in the February issue of *The Washington Monthly*). I hope the book's first few chapters become mandatory reading at AID.

From the mess of wrecked programs they observed, the Paddocks conclude that "we don't know how" to speed development in poor countries, even if we spend more money. In what may be their single biggest blow against orthodoxy, they also announce that international aid programs—from the World Bank to the UN—don't know how, either, since they're largely run by the same people as AID and make the same mistakes. So what do we do? The book says:

> I can no longer advocate foreign aid until we first learn how to make it achieve its goals. Hence I urge that we first use our own country as a laboratory. . . .
>
> To provide housing in restless Bombay, let us first learn how to rebuild our own ghettos. . . .
>
> To advise how to prevent Uruguay's socialism from destroying the nation's stability, let us first learn how to make Medicare pay as it goes. . . .
>
> To eliminate hunger in the world, let us first learn how to improve the diets of the five million malnourished Americans who cannot afford the food they need.

The book contains some insights—notably the idea that the U. S. should curb its own military spending before lecturing Pakistan about the same thing—but in general the sense of disproportion is stunning. Taking care of the five million hungry in America means changing income distribution patterns; feeding the one or two billion malnourished in the world means finding some way to coax more food out of the crowded land.

Like Church, the Paddocks do have a point—but one in which the circumstances of the argument tell more than the point itself. Now, nearly 20 years after the *Brown v Board of Education* decision, one could have said that school integration had failed. But the usual response is to find ways to make it work rather than abandoning the whole idea. The foreign aid problems the Paddocks illustrate are not ordained by God. The aid bureaucracy could find some way to keep in touch with what's going on in the field; it could protect its programs against political manipulation. The Paddocks presumably sense this, as do the other former supporters of foreign aid. Why, then, their policy of benign neglect?

The reason, I believe, is not unhappiness with the failures of foreign aid, but rather an increasing distaste for what its *success* would mean.

Here, Kid, Have a Coke

During most of the life span of our aid programs, from World War II to the mid-sixties, the goal seemed unquestionable: what more could the U. S. want for the rest of the world than the Western-style industrialization which had brought the plenty to America. But recently, as pollution, anomie, and the other costs of technological advancement have become clear, the liberal gusto for

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exporting development has faded.

Western economic patterns usually assume perverse, distorted forms when transported to the poor world. (Those interested in fuller details on this pattern should consult two fine books, Rene Dumont's *False Start in Africa* and David Hapgood's *Africa, From Independence to Tomorrow*, both of which have implications far beyond their African subjects.) In direct proportion to their exposure to Western development experts, poor countries exhibit malignant syndromes: tin dictators, or at least an elite that pretends never to have heard of agriculture or manual work; dams and other gaudy industrial projects more useful for show than production; an educational system in which children learn, as African expert Stanley Meisler put it, "that life has no more meaning than a starched white collar and a red Mercedes."

Some of the other symptoms of "development" are even more alarming: cities doubling in size every decade, choked with emigrants from the countryside; unemployment rates ranging from 25 to 60 per cent of the available working force; government budgets big on machine guns and luxury imports but short on the agricultural basics needed to feed the populace; vast strata of "over-educated unemployables" who have learned enough English or French to know they don't want to stay in the jungle towns any more.

Even the brightest hope of development advisers, the "green revolution" of miracle grains, has brought its share of industrial-revolution-type social disruption. The seeds require such fancy inputs—fertilizer and pesticides—that only the large farmers can use them; in many parts of India, the green revolution has mainly meant that small farmers have been driven from their land.

Perhaps the easiest way to sum up the development malaise is to consider two of the countries which have, by AID's standards, succeeded: Taiwan and South Korea. If the most that the colorful, if hungry, people of South America and Asia can hope for is to be turned into replica Babbits, competing for a share of the U. S. import market, then what is the point?

The economists reply that it's all a matter of adjustment. Economics is still in the shakedown phase, and a lot of mistakes that were made in the early days of foreign aid have been corrected by now. As two of the most perceptive members of the development establishment—Paul Streeten of Oxford, and Sweden's ubiquitous Gunnar Myrdal—have pointed out, many of the sins we associated with economic development came from half-baked economics. One of the finest examples is a theory called "Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor," or the "Lewis model," after its creator, Sir Arthur Lewis. Its central idea was that, in Pakistan as in Britain, labor was the most valuable economic commodity. Therefore, the theory reasoned, the poor countries were actually lucky, since they had so many people who had nothing to do. The answer was to get them off the land and into the cities, where they could be put to work at factory benches. The problem, as later became obvious, was that there were many more available workers than potential factory jobs; whenever the theory went into action, the net result was the creation of an unfed, idle urban horde where previously there had been peasants earning their share of the harvest.

Helping the Gnomes of Zurich

The list of similar theories is long—some economists have made a career out of adding items—but there is one other major theoretical "error" worth noting. Drawing on patterns shown in Europe and the U. S., where the wealthy provide the capital for economic growth, some economists expected the same patterns to emerge in the underdeveloped countries. The thing to do, then, was to

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keep money out of the hands of the lower classes, who spent it all for food and housing, and funnel it to the thrifty rich. Unfortunately, the theories did not reckon with the special kind of elite that often prevails in poor countries, especially in Latin America, and which tends to stash its money in Swiss banks rather than local factories.

Development economics has caught up with many of these errors; now, the fashionable talk is about agricultural projects, "practical" education, and other down-to-earth concepts. But the goal of all the manipulation is still the same: economic development—the same industrialized end as before. Prior to going on to fame in other areas, Walt Rostow made this point well in *The Stages of Economic Growth*, outlining the steps that countries must pass through while growing to maturity. The aim of the development adviser was to remove the barriers that stand between the poor country and what Rostow called its "take-off" point. Even among the most progressive of the modern economists, this process has hardly been challenged. When the advisers speak of "balanced growth," they are talking not about ways to contain some of the social strains of turning a tribal land into a modern economy, but only of the fastest route to industrialization.

It is this sense of grim inevitability which, I believe, is making liberals draw back from foreign aid. One need not entertain romantic views of happy tribal life to feel a sense of tragedy and loss: if the world's future is that it be remade in the image of Pittsburgh or Miami Beach, why should we hurry?

A possible answer to that question, and a hint of a new liberal rationale for foreign aid, comes from an unlikely source. In *Benevolent Aggression*,* Richard N. Farmer, like the Paddocks, tries to explain why foreign aid has failed; but where the Paddocks are inclined to give up in the face of problems, Farmer is ready with a whole pack of solutions.

Farmer is a business professor at Indiana University, and much of his book reads like a tract extolling the work ethic. But the book presents a complex theory of development, with important implications. Farmer's main premise is that all foreign aid projects have overlooked the most influential factor of all: the managerial, profit-motivated, go-get-'em spirit that the carefree poor must learn if they want to master Western technology. Without this, he says, the countries are consigned to permanent retardation. Liberal administrators of aid programs, always soft of heart, refuse to face this fact. But when they do, Farmer concludes, they will say something like this to their clients: Want to join in the wealth? Then you must imitate our discipline scheming and saving, working hard, and foregoing the lavish wakes and parties that gobble so much money:

> Examination of the affluent of the world does suggest that they behave quite differently from the poor, even when they are in the same country. Because we are too polite nowadays to suggest directly to someone that he should change his behavior, we normally talk about power plants and engineering technologies rather than behavior. It all comes down to the same thing. If you're going to get rich the way we did, you're going to have to behave the way we did. . . . We want people who get the job done, who will drive forward across obstacles to win, at whatever cost to themselves. In short, we want an uptight super-achiever.

Natives in Overalls

Stripped of its haranguing overtones, this view would fit right in with what Dumont, Myrdal, Hapgood, and others say. Myrdal describes the "soft state" syndrome—when a government refuses to correct corruption and laziness—as one of the greatest impediments to progress in the poor countries. But the solution seems just

**Benevolent Aggression*. Richard N. Farmer McKay.

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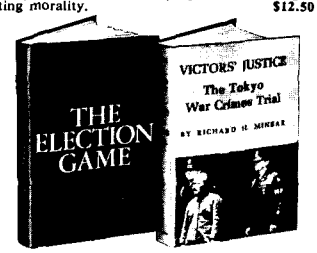

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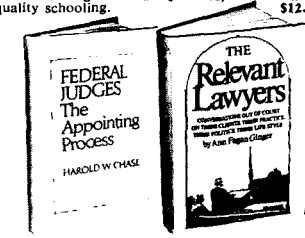

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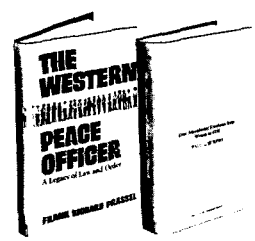

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as bad. If, as Farmer says, the only way to indoctrinate the indolent peoples in correct behavior is through "culture-busting"—a phrase that calls up images of people trading in their bright native robes for factory drab, or regulating their lives by the 40-hour week rather than by rice-planting cycles—it would be hard to drum up much enthusiasm for the venture among Americans who now lament that their own culture has been so thoroughly busted.

Farmer answers, in the most significant passage of his book, by describing what happens after Western medicine introduces "death control" into poor countries:

> It comes down to this: all cultures are going to get busted, and the most painful busting is going to happen in the poorer countries and subcultures. Once a culture or a country accepts death control, all else follows. Population expands; unless the economic base gets changed very fast to cover the increase, someone starves sooner or later. . . . Now, how do you increase production? The Western way is the only one we know that works. So you get your power plants, your irrigation systems, your fertilizers, your factories, and all the rest—and in the process change men and women to be able to handle these new tools. That's the rub—the kind of person who can figure out what to do in a power plant or fertilizer warehouse is not going to be anything but a Western man.

The meaning here is so unpleasant that it is preferable not to think about it. Farmer is saying that 100, or even 25, years ago the West might have avoided the process that turns tribesmen into starched-collar unemployables; we might have shied from the now-distasteful role as cultural dictators to the world. But now we've been to the jungles with our doctors and our malaria sprays, and the choice is out of anyone's hands. Unless we accept restored "death control" through famine, the only chance is to speed world economic development to keep up with the two to three percent annual growth in population.

This is not the kind of challenge designed to rouse liberal enthusiasm, for two reasons. First, the future seems only to mean that the other countries of the world will follow our route to a life of big cities, clogged highways, and standardized shopping centers. Our feelings about our own achievements are sufficiently mixed that we hesitate to promote the same goals overseas.

Second, and more important, there is the danger of "cultural imperialism." There was a time, not long past, when the missionary streak transcended all others in our foreign policy. Farmer's book shows that the impulse is still there, waiting to convert the natives. But among its old liberal-internationalist promoters, this zeal has nearly died in the last decade, mainly because of the war. If we have absorbed nothing else from Vietnam, we have learned that our values aren't always right and can't be grafted whole onto another culture. The lesson came at too high a price to be easily ignored. With a hundred years' hindsight, we now condemn the British and French for imposing their ethnocentric values on Africa and Asia. Knowing that, do we dare do the same today?

While this hesitancy about exporting our culture might have done marvels for our foreign policy 10 years ago, it has a quaint, anachronistic touch when applied to our current foreign-aid dilemma. It requires an extraordinary amount of either romanticism or hubris to think that, if only America would curb its foreign-aid meddling in the third world, all Western influences would go away. The cultural mixing of the world has already gone on to such an extent that it is pointless to worry about "interference" with other ways of life. Not all of the mixing has been bad: just as Zen Buddhism and French bread have enriched American culture, so American medicine and rock music have been bright additions in Ghana and Guinea. When "interference" is accompanied by military power, it is of course a different matter. But the nasty fact liberals must face is that the

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world's cultures have already been mixed, none retains its original purity. The challenge now is to identify the best elements of different cultures, and try to encourage them where they can do some good.

Time Marches On

If we draw back from our foreign aid program, culture-busting will still go on—but by whom? By Coca-Cola, the United Fruit Company, Texaco, and the hundred other multinationals that do business in every part of the world. By *Time*, the Voice of America, and the broadcast commercials which so clearly impart the materialist flavor of Western life. By the universities, especially British and French, which persist in imposing their absurd, useless notions of "education" on people who should be more concerned with tractors and village life. Realizing that these facets of the West are going to interfere, no matter what nice reservations we have about cultural imperialism, we must try to present another, better, set of ideas.

To find guidelines for these "better" ideas, we have two questions to answer: first, whether there is an alternative to the grubby path of industrial development whose consequences we mourn in much of the third world; and second, what our foreign policy can do to encourage these ideas.

Benevolent Aggression provides a starting point. In Farmer's view, it is frivolous to think of other modes of culture-busting, since the Western path to development is the only available choice. "In modern times, only Red China tried to modernize in a non-Western way," he says. "It didn't work."

Farmer is wrong, and the mistake is crucial. While we should not idealize China as a model for the rest of the world, it is undeniable that the country has "worked" in a way that few other poor countries have. From a starting point fully as impoverished as that of any other Asian country, the Chinese have made impressive economic advances (certified beyond questioning when Joe Alsop visited China this year and pronounced it a success). Moreover, the Chinese have done so without the social strains that predominate in the rest of the developing world. In most of Africa and Asia, the "economic growth rates" the governments announce rarely show up in improved living conditions for the peasants. In China, there has been a serious attempt to share the economic benefits. It is still better to be a scientist or party boss than a rice farmer or laborer, but the gap between the masses and the leaders is less extreme in China than elsewhere. Observers have noted the difference between Peking's streets and the slums of Djakarta or Sao Paulo.

It is easy to dismiss China as the lone example of what a country can do if it successfully seals itself off from the West. But much of China's progress has been based on Western techniques and ideas. The factories and tractors in China are not much different from those used elsewhere; and Maoism, the animating philosophy of China's growth, is a combination of Chinese traditions and Marxism, an imported Western theory. From this mixture, the Chinese have done what Farmer, and indeed most experts, would consider impossible: carrying out economic development without strictly imitating Western society.

China's innovation seems to be the emphasis on individual sacrifice and self-discipline, for the general community welfare. Before this could make any headway at all, the Chinese had to do something about the pervasive fear of being gypped which exists throughout the developing world. There can be no more powerful barrier to progress than the knowledge that, whatever gains are made, half will be siphoned off in corruption and the rest will go to the junta or strong men in control. In the standard

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Western view, Mao's appeals for self-sacrifice seem absurd; as Farmer points out on many an Adam Smith-ish page, the only way to get people to do anything is to make it economically worth their while. In development planning, this can lead to some healthy measures—such as land reform. But more often, it tempts governments to import a whole Western system of monetary incentives; this, in turn, leads to the impractical education, white-collar elites, and the general social chaos of the third world. China suggests that there may be other ways to develop, based on different forms of reward—psychic rather than monetary.

The Kentucky Colonel in Cuba

Enough other countries have toyed with this altered value system to show that it can work. In Cuba, Fidel Castro wisely avoided the Russian mistake of assuming that slothful, overgrown bureaucracies would somehow be more creative than slothful, overgrown economic elites. To wage their war against bureaucracy, the Cubans tried to build a new ethic based on manual labor and communal work—all of which is the furthest possible extreme from the starched-collar values of most other poor countries. "The moment we develop an elite in Cuba, voluntary labor is dead, and the country runs on voluntary labor," a Cuban official told writer Barry Reckord. "Clearly no man is going to cut cane if the Major is at the beach with his wife and a basketful of fried chicken." Which doesn't mean that the cane cutters aren't still dreaming of the beach scenes.

Several other countries have tried to involve their people in the country's growth, with varying degrees of success. Israel is perhaps the prime example of what determined people can do on sub-standard real estate (although the economists always dismiss it as having the head start of "pre-conditioned" citizens). In Tanzania, Julius Nyerere has tried to bring the educational system down to earth, with more emphasis on practical, agrarian skills and less on ways to get a job at the UN or the finance ministry. Senegal and other African countries have put on big campaigns for a return to the bush (called "*animation rurale*" in Senegal), but in most cases the leaders' evident distaste for rustic living dooms the plans from the start. Perhaps if more leaders would emulate Castro or Nyerere and work in the fields, there would be more Chinas and Tanzanias, and fewer Brazils or South Koreas.

The most obvious similarity between the countries with a communal spirit—China, Cuba, Tanzania, Israel—is that they are all revolutionary societies, where a new order has been deliberately created. That may mean—as Frank Church concluded in his Senate speech—that we should sit and wait for the revolution to come to Brazil and the Ivory Coast, but this is an unpredictable, slow route. A more responsible course would be to do what we can now to encourage those qualities that seem to set the successful countries off from the ones we think of as sores. That some of the qualities of discipline and commitment may be exported was shown in East Africa by the Tanzam Railroad. There Chinese advisers stupefied old Africa hands by inspiring Tanzanians and Zambians into group effort. The AID experts who fly in for a week or two, or serve a two-year spell at the consulate, have rarely managed such a feat.

Three Ways to Help

From the examples of good and bad development, we can find several common ideas to apply to our aid efforts. The first is working to reduce the tribal and racial divisions in many poor countries. Recently there has been a nostalgia for "tribal" ties in America and especially in Europe—as our roots give way, we think fondly of the tribesmen who know who they are

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and where they belong. It is easy, from this perspective, to overlook how clumsy and cruel tribal divisions can be in countries suffering enough from other impediments. A handy mnemonic device, for use whenever tribal nostalgia comes on, is to remember what Amin has done in Uganda, the Hausas did to the Ibos in Nigeria, or the Hindus and Moslems do to each other in India. Along with hunger and elitism, tribalism is one of the three great debilitating forces of the poor world. Reducing this irrational hatred is one of the few jobs outsiders can do especially well, operating as go-betweens for groups that would otherwise be slaughtering each other.

In Cyprus, for example, Greek schools teach hatred of the Turks, and Turkish schools teach hatred of the Greeks. What is needed is the introduction of teachers from other countries into these schools, third parties who would reduce hatred by not preaching it.

It is important to remember that "tribalism" is only a shorthand for all the limitations—racial, religious, cultural, or national—on man's concern for his fellows. In the old China, for example, trust and sympathy dried up at the borders of one's own family. One of Mao's first efforts, then, was to dispell that atmosphere of suspicion.

A second task, which raises all our hackles about "cultural imperialism" but which must be faced, is to encourage ambition and individual motivation. This idea may be phrased several ways: the need to achieve, the entrepreneurial spirit, taking pleasure in work. What it means, in concrete terms, is breaking down the overwhelming feeling of impotence that predominates among the peasants of most poor countries. The combined forces of nature and institutions—from diseases and floods to the church and local government—naturally make people feel they are victims of fate and the environment. Until that feeling is removed, it is often impossible to free the talents and energies the country needs.

This is a hard idea to accept, for it calls up all our worst memories of American do-gooders abroad—Pyle in Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*, or the bright, young Peace Corps trainees ready to bring George Washington and Horatio Alger to the peoples of the third world. But ambition is not a purely American trait. Through the years, dozens of other groups have been noted for it (the Lebanese and Chinese, the Ibo and Kikuyu tribes, are a few examples). And it need not carry with it the competitive, cutthroat spirit that is the worst of the American ethic. This, after all, is the lesson of China and Cuba: individual energies which have not been used before can be stimulated by something other than the profit system. Hong Kong provides another example of how an external idea, this one non-Marxist, can break through old barriers. Like China, Hong Kong had to cope with the pervasive air of suspicion: members of one family would hardly deal with another family, for fear they'd be cheated. Mao tried to counter this suspicion with his attacks on the family structure. In Hong Kong, the agent of change was British Law, which lowered the risks of dealing with strangers. These examples do not mean that we should incorporate Marxism, or the Common Law, into our foreign aid programs, but only that outsiders can work significant, healthy changes.

The third element is by far the most difficult, and the most dependent on the peoples' own efforts rather than help from outside. This is developing that sense of community, or group effort, which distinguishes China from the Philippines, North Vietnam from the South. While we cannot provide internal motivation, we can help break one of the main restraining forces: the debilitating, imitation-Western elites that seem to pop up everywhere, convincing the

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people that independence is the same as colonial rule, only with bosses of a different color. By their mere presence, Westerners have been responsible for much of the elites' genteel lifestyle: what Pakistani, having seen a group of white-shirted UN experts drive through town, can doubt what the Good Life means? A major contribution that the U. S. can make is to offer alternate models. In this regard the Peace Corps was onto the right idea: when "rich" Westerners spend several years living in the countryside doing agricultural work, they can be far more persuasive than government broadcasts exhorting young students to return to their villages. In Ethiopia, for example, the Peace Corps' presence has contributed to formation of a domestic service corps. For the first time, university students in Ethiopia have gone out to the bush to see what the real problems are there.

Consciences in Gear

None of these approaches, it might seem, requires any formal foreign aid program. We could simply revive the Peace Corps, make it forget its old anti-communist junior-ambassador role and concentrate on the things it did at its best. These included performing simple jobs like teaching and nursing in places where they needed to be done; suggesting similar ideas to people in the host country; trying to get people to work together across family boundaries; and trying to replace rote learning with educational systems that opened people's minds.

In doing so, we give ourselves another opportunity: to turn our aid flows which so often seem wasted into effective tools of development. Moreover, in the short run, we can pick out those forms of aid we know to be effective, and enlarge them.

The first of these, which is crucial though obvious, is simply providing enough food to keep people from starving. It may be hard to find noble elements in our recent foreign policy, but one which the country can be proud of is its commitment in the sixties to make up the food deficits in India and later Biafra and Bangladesh. It is hard to know whether the famine predicted this year for North Africa and India will be as serious as that of the mid-sixties, but here is certainly an opportunity for humanitarian, successful aid.

A second step, which we can take with little fear of cultural imperialism, is to reverse some of the handicaps we now impose on export industries in poor countries. If all the third world were in the position of the Arabs—having near-monopoly control over a commodity whose price is certain to rise—then we could all relax and let normal economic forces do their work. But as reams of "neo-imperialism" tracts have shown, in most poor countries the price of raw material exports keeps falling as imports from the West cost more and more.

Finally, we can keep looking for those aid projects which, unlike the usual heavy industries or dams, will open doors to a whole chain of economic development. One of the best examples is irrigation projects, which can not only boost the food output of a country, but also make work for a great many peasants who have gone into the cities. In some Asian countries, the hand-tool industry has triggered a chain reaction: farmers are able to plow the land; artisans are kept working; there is more food to eat and fewer tools to import. All development agencies naturally claim that they are on the lookout for key projects, but too often the advisers fall back on their gut feeling that England, the U. S., and Germany all had big steel mills at this stage of life, so the Congo should, too.

The answers are easier to outline than to execute, but with at least a glimpse of where to start, we should be able to put our liberal consciences back into gear. ■

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Realerpolitik: the texts are getting better

by Luke Popovich

Although it is self-evident that the political world changed drastically during the sixties, most of us outside academia nurture the quaint illusion that the teaching of government has somehow remained static since our last bout with Poli Sci 111. Nothing could be further from the truth. While the politicalization of the campus has become a mass-media cliche, the politicalization of the teaching of politics has been noted only rarely outside academic journals. Rather than remaining aloof, introductory courses in government have been fundamentally transformed by a decade of social flux.

These introductory courses not only serve as the discipline's lowest common denominator, but also reach far more people than more advanced, and often more subtle, courses. If done well, an introductory course in political science can provide the framework for a lifetime of intelligent observation—and occasional participation—in the political process. If done poorly, an introductory course provides just another set of misconceptions to be discarded during that difficult transition from academia to the "real" world.

Luke Popovich is on the staff of The Washington Monthly.

Textbooks are especially important because they provide the nucleus of all but the most avant-garde introductory courses in government. Displays at the last American Political Science Association convention demonstrated vividly that there are textbooks for virtually every approach to political science, but conversations with book vendors and teachers revealed that there are currently three major types of introductory texts on the market—the traditional, the liberal pluralist, and the new "ultra-modern" elitist.

The vast chasm between the traditional and elitist approaches is made clear just by comparing the opening sentences of two archetypal political science texts. The classic tome, *Essentials of American National Government*, written by the late Frederic A. Ogg and P. Orman Ray and revised by William H. Young, was first published in 1932 and is now in its 10th edition. During the 1950s this fact-filled, descriptive text, which reads like an overgrown high-school civics book, was to introductory political science what today Samuelson is to economics—the home base, setting the discipline's standards and biases. But now, although its share of the market is still hefty (if steadily declining), it seems like a relic of another age.

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The tone is set in the book's first paragraph, subtitled "The Great Experiment":

> The American system of government is now nearly 200 years old. It has outlived virtually all the systems of popular government in the recorded history of this planet. Conceived as a great experiment in self-rule, it has survived a terrible ordeal by combat, progressively widened its popular base, deployed its strength around the globe as a world power of the first rank, and now stands as leader of the free world and model for many heretofore subject peoples striving for self-expression and self-rule. . . .

Vastly different in tone is Thomas R. Dye and L. Harmon Ziegler's *The Irony of Democracy*, which might be described as the new "hot book" of the political science world. Dye and Ziegler, published in 1970 and subtitled "An Uncommon Introduction to American Politics," starts out bluntly:

> Elites, not masses, govern America. Especially in this industrial, scientific, and nuclear age, life in a democracy, just as in a totalitarian society, is shaped by a handful of men. In spite of differences in their approach to the study of power in America, scholars—political scientists and sociologists alike—agree that "the key political, economic, and social decisions are made by "tiny minorities."

It is difficult to appreciate how vast the transformation in political science texts has been without an extended look at what was, until a decade ago, the standard text, Young, Ogg, and Ray. Even the title, *Essentials of American National Government*, is instructive, since the book's 556 pages and mountains of statistics make it clear that nothing less than *all* the facts are essential. Facts themselves, in a bloodless, nuts-and-bolts parade, seem to represent government in the same way that "Gas, Food, Lodging" signs symbolize entire cities on interstate highways.

In portraying the surface of American government, the text relies on description and statistics, consigning current academic research to neat bibliographies at the end of each chapter. At times this orgy of description is reminiscent of Voltaire's Dr. Pangloss. Although it makes no more than a passing effort to discuss the real costs of running for public office, the text's 1969 edition devotes more than two pages to detailing the since-abolished provisions of the Corrupt Practices Act of 1925—provisions which even Young, Ogg, and Ray admit were then "very imperfectly met."

There are roseate tendencies, as when the text intones, "The office of the President, with its awesome responsibilities and solitary dignity, has accumulated a tradition and a prestige through the years that lift the men who fill it beyond their realized talents." But the real problem is that this text's approach no more conveys the essence of how politics really works than a table of altitudes in the *World Almanac* gives a sense of the grandeur of the Himalayas.

At times, the book's reluctance to take a stand is akin to Clay Whitehead's view of journalistic objectivity. In their discussion of the congressional seniority system, for example, the authors devote one paragraph to the abuses of the system and the next one to its defense, coming down on neither side. Their extended discussion of "How a Bill Becomes a Law" leaves little room for a congressman carrying the ball for the highway lobby or a senator receiving a campaign contribution in exchange for introducing a private immigration bill.

After discussing special interest groups, the text acknowledges that "there are a large number of genuine and deeply felt interests in society which are rarely expressed and almost never organized." Are they talking about the poor? The blacks? The young? Small chance. "The best example of the role of the unorganized interests," according to Young, Ogg, and Ray, is "the attack on corruption in government."

Because of its genetic limitations and conceptual blinders, it's not surprising that the text quickly lost

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favor in the 1960s. But before the descriptive approach to political science could be abandoned, another method had to be developed to take its place. The new technique, "behaviorism," was the logical outgrowth of the profession's insistence on calling itself a "science," rather than more modestly stating its objectives as "doing politics" as at British universities. At the core of behaviorism are its self-consciously scientific studies—the quasi-objective, heavily quantitative measurements of voting behavior and legislative decision-making. At times, it seems that the academics' newfound zeal for scientific rigor stems from efforts to convince themselves that they are really scientists.

Irish Humor

Nevertheless, the first, and still the most prominent, of the behaviorist texts, *The Politics of American Democracy*, by Marian Irish and James Prothro, is a quantum leap forward from Young, Ogg, and Ray. Most fundamentally, the view it presents has some recognizable connection to political reality. The authors treat the cold war as an exercise in self-deception and say that ideas of rational decision-making in government are "largely an intellectual fiction." They also criticize most domestic policy as mere "incrementalism," a niggardly way of achieving whatever is politically expedient.

The tone of the newer book is also different. The text lists its biases at the end of each chapter and takes a free hand with the historical/constitutional background which Young, Ogg, and Ray treat with such reverence. Like many other new texts, Irish and Prothro not only revises the traditional recipe of 99 parts fact sweetened with one part commentary, but it also adds a new ingredient: cartoons from *The New Yorker* and lyrics by Judy Collins are slipped in for spice.

Since one of the authors, James Prothro, was a pioneer of behavioral research, it is no surprise that this text shows the best and worst aspects of the method. The virtue of behaviorism is that it tries to reproduce the political process rather than airily describing how government is supposed to work. Almost every assertion in Irish and Prothro is buttressed by a footnoted reference to a relevant academic monograph. A 47-page chapter on Congress, for example, cites more than 40 studies and contains 101 footnotes.

The problem with this approach is not its rigor, but its tendency to provide scientific evidence for what should be obvious from a stroll down the street. To prove that more members of Congress show up for votes when party whips are active than for routine balloting, the book cites a 1964 study by Randall A. Ripley entitled, "The Party Whip: Organization in the United States House of Representatives." A frequent criticism of political scientists is that when they try to emulate natural scientists their first step is to adopt the technician's lame imagination. Easily quantifiable aspects of politics, like election returns, are overemphasized at the expense of more nebulous qualities like beliefs or values. The Pentagon Papers abound with examples of this misplaced emphasis: the Army's reports toted up the rice and ammunition figures, but overlooked such non-statistical elements as the will to fight.

If behaviorism is the method in *The Politics of American Democracy*, pluralism is the model. Pluralism is the liberal faith that decisions in America are the result of competition and compromise between conflicting interest groups. The pluralist considers concentrations of power inevitable and argues that the individual is represented by interest groups. This pluralism is the source of the jungle-code realism in Irish and Prothro's promise to analyze "every institution and policy. . . from the point of view: 'Who gets helped? Who gets hurt?' "

The authors' faith in pluralism and their conviction that democracy still

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prevails in an era of increasingly powerful institutions is never more apparent than in their discussion of political parties and the opportunities they provide:

> Many observers roundly condemn American political parties for being oligarchical. But so few persons take an active part in politics that roles of leadership are amazingly easy to come by.... The ambitious young man with talent but without connections finds more opportunities to "make a name for himself" in politics than in private business.

Carrying the argument further, Irish and Prothro contend that "internal democracy in political parties is not essential," because "even if the parties were internally autocratic, the desire to win elections would force them to offer attractive candidates."

Yet one of the strengths of the Irish and Prothro text—and a clue to what allowed it to endure throughout a decade of turmoil—is the subtlety of many of its arguments. For example, dedication to the belief that the individual is represented by conflicting pressure groups does not blind the authors to the realization that the wealthy and already powerful tend to be the best organized:

> What is disturbing is the upper-status bias of the entire [pressure group] system. The political parties decrease the extreme nature of the bias, but... they do not eliminate it. Nor... do the official agencies through which the pressure groups and the parties operate.

Piecemeal Politics

By the end of the sixties, critics were lining up to attack both pluralism and the tame liberalism with which it was linked. The strife of the sixties presented two objections to pluralism. First, the pluralists' laissez-faire approach virtually insures that the powerful, moneyed interests will prevail over poor or disorganized groups. Second, critics charge that the pluralist stress on competition leads only to piecemeal compromise while no one cares about what is right, just, or good for the general welfare. The "invisible hand," which pluralists assumed would descend from the Capitol Dome to guide political conflict, could not prevent chaos.

With pluralism on the wane, what could take its place? Where would political direction come from, if not from the ebb and flow of competing institutions? The new answer, to reflect a growing cynicism about government, is the Elite. Within a relatively short time, a sizable number of academics shifted their attention to the top of the social pyramid, where the elite few are supposed to control political power.

Why has elitism suddenly become so attractive a theory? Certainly the history of the 1960s—as an elite continued the Vietnam war regardless of popular opinion—was a factor. Similarly influential was the development of sophisticated studies indicating that class lines were as rigid in the United States as they are in Europe.

By 1971 this doctrine had developed enough to produce a thoroughly elitist text, Thomas R. Dye and L. Harmon Ziegler's *The Irony of American Democracy*. The book describes itself as "an explanation of American political life based on an elitist theory of democracy," and announced its central theory:

> To conclude that the nation's future depends upon an enlightened citizenry... reflects the *symbols* rather than *realities* of American politics.

The authors go on to say, "It is the irony of democracy that the responsibility for the survival of liberal democratic values depends upon elites, not masses." The evidence for this assertion is a series of behavioristic studies illustrating that most voters know nothing about candidates or issues, that only the college-educated elite believes in the civil libertarian values of the First Amendment. Chapter titles like "Elites and Masses: The Shaky Foundations of Democ-

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racy," and phrases like "working authoritarianism" convey the message.

Yet in trying to create a logically consistent text, Dye and Ziegler end up stretching elitism just too far. Against the backdrop of the recent Nixon-McGovern debacle, it is hard to accept notions like "elections are primarily a symbolic exercise for the masses to help tie them to the established order." Many of these discussions are provocative—Dye and Ziegler seems to be that rare text that might actually stimulate classroom discussion—but some of the conclusions strain credulity. While American government clearly does not follow the civics-book outlines of Young, Ogg, and Ray, neither is it the symbolic sham depicted in Dye and Ziegler.

The two authors disagree as to whether elitism is good or bad. In the preface, they say "one author values radical reform as a means of establishing a truly democratic political system," adding that "the anti-democratic sentiments of the masses can be changed." The other, while recognizing the wounds that the elite can inflict, concludes that "a well-ordered society governed by educated and resourceful elites" is better than mob rule. Still, they both agree that "there is no reason to be complacent about the future of American democracy."

Goodbye, Dr. Pangloss

It is clear that the difference between the old and new government texts is of another kind, and is more significant, than that between old and new physics books. Unlike natural science, political science undergoes its revolution not when new facts turn up, but when new values and attitudes emerge. The values that surfaced during the sixties dictated a more realistic approach to the study of politics. As products of this trend, the new texts show a commitment toward trenchant social criticism. Young, Ogg, and Ray's students learned little about the seamy side of American government; Dye and Ziegler's students learn little else. The traditional text uses statistics to inform the student about the gross tonnage of American steel companies; the elitists use them to point out the high salaries of corporate executives. Words such as "ideology," "repression," "masses," and "elites,"—once thought to apply only to totalitarian societies—are now shamelessly used in descriptions of the United States. There is, in these texts, a further suggestion that the locus of power has quite literally passed from sight, having moved away from those institutions that traditionally claimed to be its source.

A common failing of all these books is their lack of feel for what it's really like in government. There is none of the insight into the culture of the executive branch that characterizes George Reedy's *The Twilight of the Presidency* or the kind of understanding of life on the Hill that distinguished James Boyd's "A Senator's Day." None of these texts would explain the complex of values and pressures that created the moon program or made Robert McNamara fool himself with numbers. Neither would they illumine the impotence of the Senate's doves or the cowardice of the average bureaucrat. With so many of the real reasons for what is wrong in government thus ignored, it is not suprising that these books have so little to say about how we can get things straightened out. There is then a failure both in diagnosis and prescription.

Nevertheless, real progress has been made. The student who has Dye and Ziegler or Irish and Prothro is a lot better off than the one who is stuck with—as for years almost everyone was—Young, Ogg, and Ray. It is probable that those students who grew up in the sixties have made a substantial contribution to their own good fortune simply by refusing to buy the Panglossian view of the United States government that political scientists were accustomed to peddling. ■

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political book notes

Public affairs books to be published in March.

The American Enterprise Institute Budget and Resource Allocation Projection Model. Paul N. Courant. American Enterprise Institute.

After Yalta: America and the Origins of the Cold War. Lisle A. Rose. Scribner's, $7.95.

Beyond Bureaucracy: Essays in the Development and Evolution of Human Organization. Warren G. Bennis. McGraw-Hill, $2.95.

Bitter Wages: Ralph Nader's Study Group Report on Disease and Injury on the Job. Joseph A. Page, Mary Win O'Brien. Grossman, $6.95. One of the more readable Nader reports, combining medical and technical information with a sound legal analysis of why the government hasn't done what it should about job safety. An article by one of the authors appears in this issue.

The Black Muslims in America. C. Eric Lincoln. Beacon, $10/$2.95.

The Books in Fred Hampton's Apartment. Richard Stern. Dutton, $8.95.

The Budget Process: Structural Reform. William A. Niskanen. American Enterprise Institute, $3.

The Case for Black Reparations. Boris I. Bittker. Random House, $7.95/$1.95. Legal and constitutional arguments that blacks deserve compensation for years of Jim Crow. Impeccable as far as it goes, but weirdly detached from political reality.

Chicanos and Rural Poverty. Vernon M. Briggs, Jr. Johns Hopkins, $6/$1.95. Despite the title, the book's real focus is migratory labor problems. The major points will be familiar to those who have read *The Grapes of Wrath*; the details this book adds are of limited interest to the general reader.

A China Passage. John Kenneth Galbraith. Houghton Mifflin.

The City: New Town or Home Town? Felizitas Lenz-Romeiss. Praeger, $8.95.

Community Organizing. George Brager, Harry Specht. Columbia University, $10.

Confrontation: The Destruction of a College President. Ken Metzler. Nash, $10.

Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph. Geoffrey Perrett. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, $10. This well-written social history falls tantalizingly short of the author's goal: explaining just what it was about World War II America that made the whole country *work*.

Defeat of an Ideal: A Study of the Self-Destruction of the United Nations. Shirley Hazzard. Atlantic-Little, Brown, $8.50. Excellent analysis of why the UN has been such a bust. Refreshingly free from the simple-minded idealism that usually accompanies descriptions of the UN. The book is marred only by patches of tortured prose ("what has evolved. . . is a new species of pusillanimity, whose tenacity, energies, and invectiveness are concerted not only toward inaction but to pugnacious defense of the procedural rightness of inaction") and an over-long probe into Dag Hammarskjold's psyche.

Disturbers of the Peace. Colman McCarthy. Houghton-Mifflin, $5.95. Graceful, provocative essays, revised from the author's *Washington Post* columns.

Divorce: What A Woman Needs to Know. Barbara B. Hirsch. Regnery, $6.95. Not a substitute for a lawyer, but a handbook for discussing divorce intelligently with your lawyer, this surprisingly well-written and comprehensible guide is marred only by a strong middle-class bias.

Education for Annihilation. William H. Boyer. Hogarth Press-Hawaii, $3.25.

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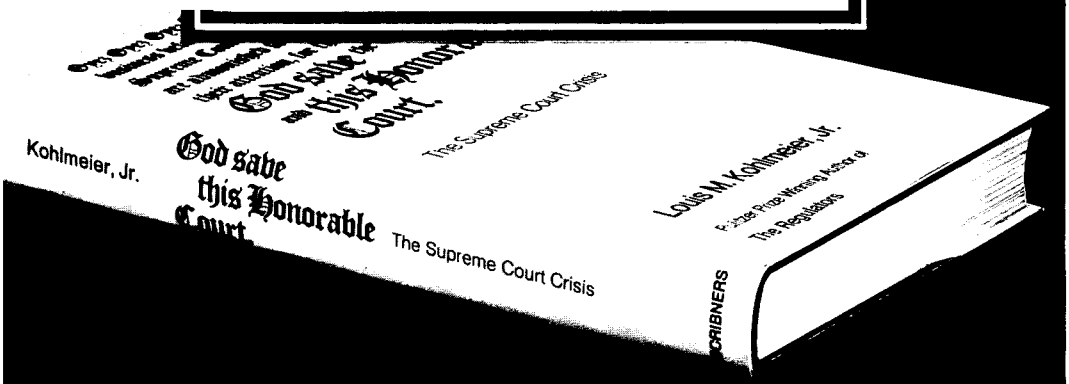

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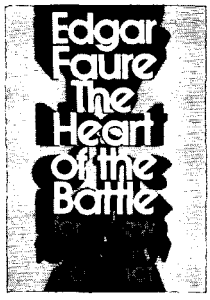

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A World Elsewhere: The New American Foreign Policy. James Chace. Scribner's, $5.95. Although by no means belonging to the "bulk equals profundity" school of criticism, we still find it hard to justify a $5.95 price for a 107-page book. Still, the essay by the managing editor of *Foreign Affairs* is a stylishly written overview of Nixon's foreign policy.

The World of Time, Inc: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, 1941-1960. Robert T. Elson. Atheneum, $10.

The Great Nixon Turnaround: America's New Foreign Policy in the Post-Liberal Era. Lloyd C. Gardner, ed. Franklin Watts, $2.95. A lot of pages in service of a simple point: that the Nixon who met Mao is different from Alger Hiss' old tormentor. The book consists of a lackluster introductory essay and reprinted articles by journalists, academics, and the President himself. James David Barber's *The Presidential Character* and Gary Wills' *Nixon Agonistes* remain the best books on Nixon. ■

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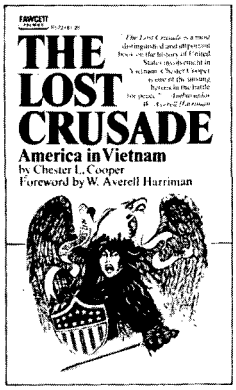

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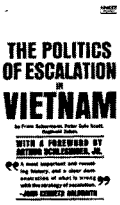

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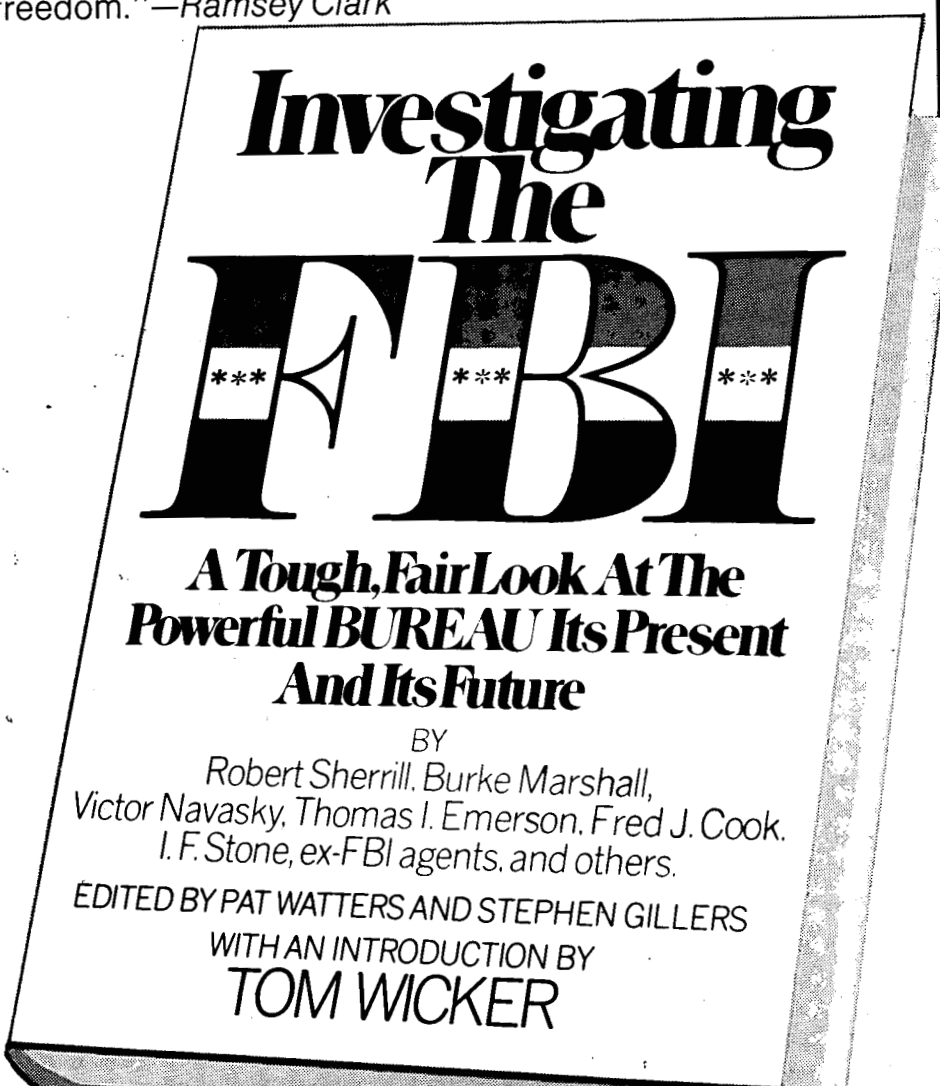

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